

THE WORLDVIEW AND THOUGHT
OF TOLOMEO FIADONI
(PTOLEMY OF LUCCA)

DISPUTATIO

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THE WORLDVIEW AND THOUGHT
OF TOLOMEO FIADONI
(PTOLEMY OF LUCCA)

by

James M. Blythe



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As always, for Sheila

and for those who died while I was writing this book:
my mother, Ann Blythe, my aunt, Charlotte Horton,
and my father-in-law, Abe Mangel

The ultimate end of the Christian people is eternal life [...]. It pertains to the pontifical priesthood to lead to that end; therefore it will be his singularly to command in providing and in exercising governance, and in disposing those things which are necessary to that end, and similarly in removing impediments to following that end. Which art Aristotle in *Ethics* calls architectonic among the political virtues.

—Tolomeo Fiadoni, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*

Some provinces are servile by nature, and despotic rule should guide these, counting regal rule as despotic. Certain others have a virile spirit, a bold heart, and a confidence in their intelligence, and these cannot be ruled other than by political rule [...]. Such lordship is especially strong in Italy, where [...] the inhabitants were always less able to be subjected than others.

—Tolomeo Fiadoni, *De regimine principum*

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Since I worked on this and the companion volume, *The Life and Works of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)*, at the same time, my acknowledgments are virtually the same for both, except for my particular debt to John La Salle.

I am especially grateful to John, with whom I published two articles evaluating an unknown early manuscript of Hans Baron on Tolomeo Fiadoni. John was an undergraduate honours student who was directed to this important manuscript by his advisor, Ronald Witt of Duke University. Ron asked me if I could help John with some questions, and after some discussions among the three of us I agreed to collaborate with John and suggested using his work as the basis for two articles. In the end, the published articles contain much that was original both to John and to me. In this book I have used our joint work in parts of Chapters 8 and 9 for the evaluation of Baron's claim that Tolomeo was an early civic humanist.

Father Emilio Panella of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, who has published extensively on the manuscript tradition of Tolomeo's work and the documentary material in Italian archives pertaining to him, was extremely helpful to me during my two research trips to Italy. He pointed me to materials, made invaluable suggestions, and on two occasions made telephone calls for me when my wretched spoken Italian did not suffice.

David Wootton, author of an important article on the modern meaning of republicanism and Tolomeo's role in originating and transmitting it, very kindly sent me a copy of the book in which his article had appeared, since I could not obtain the Italian publication through Interlibrary Loan at my university. Everyone interested in political thought should be sure to read (it is available on the Internet for those unable to obtain the book).

I am grateful to the University of Memphis for several grants that have enabled me to pursue my research for this book. On two occasions I received Summer Research Grants that paid for two month-long trips to Italy. While there I was able to collect images of many archival documents and unpublished books, as well as visit many of the central places in Tolomeo's life. One fall semester I received a Professional Development Assignment (our equivalent of a sabbatical), during which I was able to bring all the disparate sections of this book and its companion on Tolomeo's life and works into what I hope is a coherent organization. And finally I was honoured with a Dunavant Professorship, which provided very substantial extra funds for three years that I was able to use for my research and other professional needs.

Last but not least, my wife, Sheila Martin, as she always does, tirelessly read my manuscript and found many errors, ambiguities, and infelicitous wordings. We both like nothing more than sitting next to each other at our respective computers writing our very different books, and we have spent countless pleasant hours the past ten years doing just that.



Figure 1: The church of San Romano in Lucca. Photograph by James M. Blythe.

PREFACE

In the companion volume to this book, *The Life and Works of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)*, I trace the events in the long life of this remarkable person, from his beginnings as the son of a well-to-do Luccan citizen around 1236 to his death ninety years later in *c.* 1327 as the senile bishop of Torcello in the Venetian lagoon. He led an interesting life that brought him into contact with many of the prominent figures of his day — Thomas Aquinas and Popes Celestine V and John XXII, to name only three — and took him around Italy, France, Germany, and probably Spain. He served as prior of San Romano in Lucca and Santa Maria Novella in Florence, the latter during its most turbulent years, when White and Black Guelphs clashed. He attended Dominican general and provincial chapters, organized a general chapter, and voted to elect a master general. He executed wills for prominent women, a cardinal, an important banker, and several others. He lived in the papal court in Avignon, where he was patronized by two cardinals. In his last years, as bishop of Torcello, he fought a desperate battle with his superior, the Patriarch of Grado, over the appointment of an abess, which led to his excommunication, jailing, and rescue by Pope John XXII.

Yet, we are interested in his life largely because of his writings. He is known today mainly for his continuation of Thomas Aquinas's *De regimine principum* (*De regno*), which he twisted from a celebration of monarchy to a paean on republicanism. But he also wrote a variety of other works, discussed in detail in the companion volume: a history of medieval Europe, a massive history of the church from its beginnings until his own time, a commentary on the days of Creation, and several treatises on the relationship between the church and the empire.

From my first encounter with Tolomeo while investigating his more famous teacher, Thomas Aquinas, and contemporaries Giles of Rome and John of Paris, for my doctoral dissertation, I have been shocked at how little scholarly attention

he has attracted. There have been no book-length studies of his thought and only a few articles devoted primarily to him, and those have been restricted to a few issues. There were no translations of his work into English (nor to my knowledge in any other language) until my own translation of *De regimine principum* in 1997. There are modern editions of his work, but few recent ones, with some going back to the eighteenth century. He is at best only briefly mentioned in general histories of political thought. It is safe to say that the scholarship of this important writer is still in its early stages.

As I have often proclaimed, I am convinced that Tolomeo today is on the verge of being recognized as one of the most significant political thinkers of the Middle Ages. Recent years have seen a marked increase in reference to his ideas, if not an outpouring of work dedicated to them. I believe that my translation has had something to do with this, by giving scholars an easy initial access to *De regimine principum* that may have led them to consider the original work more seriously. It is hard to see how his unusual ideas would not generate great interest, although the fact that he combined innovative political ideas with unswerving support for a hierocratic papacy may have confused some more used to thinking of the latter as antithetical to republicanism.

His ideas were certainly innovative, but in many ways they were not radical, simply embedding the practices of the Italian city-republics in a theoretical framework that had been lacking. The theoretical framework, however, generated implications corrosive to the wider European political traditions, implications that could be avoided so long as it was merely a matter of practice not directly confronting other governmental forms. Kingship and large kingdoms dominated the European scene. By treating monarchy in theory as equivalent to tyranny and despotism, something that no virtuous people who loved freedom should endure, Tolomeo directly, if unintentionally, challenged the political order. Likewise, his enthusiasm for Republican Rome, since it seemed so similar to the Italian city-republics, led him to attack Julius Caesar as a tyrant, and by implication undercut the universal jurisdiction of the medieval empire, even if he often supported it so long as it served as a defender of the church. His use of an Aristotelian analysis of existing and historical states, particularly of ones considered mixed constitutions, led him to deny that the most common forms of government were good, let alone best, although he conceded that the rigour of bad government was necessary for most people, who lacked the virtue for self-governance. While thereby justifying existing governments, Tolomeo's analysis remained corrosive to them in implying that, however necessary, they were bad in essence, thereby encouraging resistance from the citizenry, which could hardly be expected to see itself as depraved.

While I have abandoned my original intent to cover all aspects of Tolomeo's thought, I hope to do more than simply reprise what I and others have written about Tolomeo's political thought and then expand somewhat upon this. Some of this, of course, is inevitable; over the past few years I have written five articles dealing in whole or in part with Tolomeo's political thought, and this is what is most significant about his work. I also wrote a chapter relating Tolomeo's thought to the history of the theory of mixed constitutions in my 1992 book *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages*, and the introduction to my translation of *De regimine principum* includes a sketch his life and thought. I have reworked much of that material in this book, but more than that I have attempted here to understand his specifically political ideas in the context of his worldview as a whole, with the result that most of this book consists of new material, and I have tried to frame even the old material in this new context. The first five chapters, while including some old material, are for the most part a new approach to Tolomeo, and seek to explain his thought in the context of medieval beliefs and attitudes. The most important of these is of course the pervasive Christianity, central to everyone, but even more so to a priest and mendicant like Tolomeo, whose whole life revolved around the church. How can we hope to understand his approach to classical thought or the European political milieu without understanding how he conceived of Creation and God's plan for history? Or what role the supernatural and divine intervention has in the progress of that history? Only in the last four chapters do I return to the kinds of questions I had previously addressed.

As I mention in the preface to *The Life and Work of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)*, and repeat here because of its importance to this book, two themes have increasingly impressed themselves on me and play a central role in my analysis. The first is Tolomeo's struggle, never quite successful, in almost everything he wrote and on almost every subject, to reconcile conflicting authorities. In my earliest writing on Tolomeo I called attention to his inability to reconcile Aristotelian and Augustinian ideas of government, but this turned out to be only one of several similar situations. The second theme, which unlike the first is largely restricted to Tolomeo's political ideology, is that in several key areas his thought evolved and matured over the years, in particular between his earliest treatise, *De iurisdictione imperii*, and his most important work, *De regimine principum*. The discovery of these themes has made the endeavour much more exciting for me and, I hope, for the reader. For me, as for medieval practitioners of the dialectical method, the clash of powerful opposing arguments is the essence of most intellectual activity, and the rational attempt to reconcile or rebut such arguments the

fun and value of it. This process, together with Tolomeo's worldly experiences and the critical historical events of the times, drove his ideological transformation over several decades. It is fascinating to see this process at work and to observe that in many ways it did not help, for Tolomeo was never able completely to resolve any of the conflicts in his mind or work even as he claimed to see no conflicts at all. I do not claim to have resolved all aspects of the relationship between Tolomeo's conflicts, experiences, preconceptions, and influences on the one hand and his mature thought on the other. There is much for future scholars to do in this area, as well as in the study of areas of his writing that I have passed over.

I need to repeat a few more items from the preface to *Life and Work* to clarify my use of the name Tolomeo Fiadoni and the titles of his works. Scholars around the world refer to him by different names and employ semi-standard, sometimes inaccurate titles for his writings. It is never easy to change established practices, but a book like this one, which I intend to be a guide and a stimulus for future scholarship, is a good place to try. We now know for certain that the name often associated with him in notarial documents, Fiadoni, is a true surname, so I will refer to him as Tolomeo Fiadoni. I will also use what we now know to be the correct titles of two of his works: *De operibus sex dierum* instead of *Exameron*, and *De iurisdictione imperii et auctoritate summi pontificis* instead of *Determinatio compendiosa de iurisdictione imperii*. I discussed the reasons for these changes in *Life and Work*. In all of them I am following in the footsteps of a few Italian-language scholars and especially Emilio Panella, who in his articles and the standard reference he revised, *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum medii aevi*, strove to correct the record.¹

I also repeat here what I said previously about the use of the words *republicanism*, *republic*, and *Roman Republic*. I will use them throughout, except where

¹ *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum medii aevi*, ed. by Thomas Kaeppli and Emilio Panella, 4 vols (Rome: Istituto storico domenicano, 1970–93), IV, 318–25. In all citations of Tolomeo's works, I list Tolomeo Fiadoni as author and what Panella and I consider to be the correct title, but in the bibliography and in the first footnote reference of any of these I always give in parentheses the author name and title under which the edition cited appeared. Since there are many editions of his *De regimine principum*, I normally cite it by book, chapter, and paragraph number instead of by page of a particular edition. The book and chapter numbers are standard; where paragraph numbers differ I use those of my translation. In citations of his *Annales*, the number before the page number is the year under which the item appears, in citations of *Historia ecclesiastica nova* the two numbers before the page number represent the book and chapter number, and for *De Operibus Sex Dierum* the first number is the book number. I do this to avoid tedious repetition for sources that I frequently cite. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are mine.

noted, in the usual modern meaning, which distinguishes republican government from monarchy. This was not the normal ancient or medieval usage, which typically applied the word to any government, but it has proved impossible to eschew the modern usage without great awkwardness, considering the vast literature on the subject. Though I have long realized this problem, and knew that Tolomeo used the term *res publica* in an inconsistent way, sometimes in the modern sense and sometimes not, I did not realize the full import of this until I read a recent article by David Wootton that not only demonstrates that most modern translations have anachronistically imported recent usage of the word into ancient and medieval texts, but argues that Tolomeo was the first person to employ the modern usage and that this usage, though it did not immediately catch on, was later picked up by political writers in the circle of Savonarola and thence to Machiavelli and eventually, through many channels, to us.²

Just as this volume was about to be printed, I found out that the long-awaited critical edition of Tolomeo's *Historia Ecclesiastica Nova* had just been published: Tholomeus von Lucca, *Historia Ecclesiastica Nova: Nebst Fortsetzungen Bis 1329*, ed. by Ottavio Clavuot and Ludwig Schmugge, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 39 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2009).

² David Wootton, 'The True Origins of Republicanism: The Disciples of Baron and the Counter-Example of Venturi', in *Il repubblicanesimo moderno: L'idea di repubblica nella riflessione storica di Franco Venturi*, ed. by Manuela Albertone (Naples: Bibilopolis, 2006), pp. 271–304. Another version with only minimal differences, 'The True Origins of Republicanism, or *De Vera Respublica*', is available at <<http://www.york.ac.uk/crems/downloads/trueorigins.pdf>> [accessed June 2008]. There are likely other sources for the modern usage as well.

THE NATURAL, THE SUPERNATURAL, AND THE STARS

I promised earlier that I would approach Tolomeo's political thought from an unorthodox direction, beginning not with those aspects of it that appeal to modern democrats: his republicanism, his defence of the communal life of northern Italy, his equation of kingship with tyranny, his appreciation of the ancient Roman Republic — those aspects in other words that are most original and make him seem a precursor to the modern world — but with his underlying medieval worldview, which is of necessity more alien to us. Tolomeo made original contributions to subjects with little modern resonance as well, but these are often overlooked because they strike us as less interesting or relevant. But if we do not understand them we will never understand Tolomeo's complex mind.

Discussions of late medieval political thought usually centre around the reception of Aristotle's *Politics* in the decade of the 1260s following its first complete translation into Latin. Many Joachites expected 1260 to usher in the Third (and final) Age of the World, the Age of the Holy Spirit, and modern scholars have likewise mostly seen the introduction of the *Politics* as initiating a revolution in political thought and practice. This aspect of scholarly orthodoxy has been severely challenged in recent years. Those, like Cary Nederman, who have led the attack, have pointed to other classical, patristic, and medieval influences, as well as elements of medieval political reality, but they themselves rarely go outside the boundaries of the political.

While I am sympathetic to such critics, I do believe that the *Politics* had a profound effect on Tolomeo, even if it was only one of many formative influences. It is a striking fact that he cites the *Politics* in only a few of his works. The scholarly method of quoting limited passages to support or challenge our theses tends to obscure the density of certain ideas in the primary sources. Tolomeo mentions

the Aristotelian political corpus frequently only in *De operibus sex dierum* and *De regimine principum*. His other works together refer to the *Politics* only three times and to the *Ethics* fifteen (only eight of the eighteen in a political context). Tolomeo's last works, *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, *Annales*, and the two treatises on empire, contain no direct use of the *Politics*. So one might wonder whether Aristotelian political thought was much of an influence on him at all, and if perhaps he simply introduced it now and then when it could be used to bolster his opinions in a text in which readers would be expecting it. Perhaps Tolomeo merely twisted Aristotle to support himself when necessary, much as he continually does with the Bible.

I reject this suggestion and instead believe that Tolomeo underwent a profound intellectual transformation from a time in which his knowledge of the *Politics* was slight, to a time when it exercised a major influence.¹ At the same time, he remained loyal to his earlier worldviews. The addition of this particular mode of thought to all the others that had shaped him accentuated already existing tensions within his thought and created new ones, particularly between Aristotle and Augustine and, to some extent, Aristotle and hierocratic ecclesiology. The subjects of his later writings allowed him to evade these tensions, and we cannot say whether his views on Aristotle changed yet again. But we cannot simply ignore the difference in his use of the *Politics* in his various writings. Still less can we ignore all the other influences and prejudices that contributed to his political attitudes and views. So while Charles Till Davis's judgement that 'Ptolemy was a better Aristotelian than Aquinas because of his emphasis on the polity, and a better one than Dante or Marsilius because he did not think that the need for government originated with the Fall'² may be correct, it is correct only relatively, in comparison with Thomas Aquinas and Marsilius of Padua. Tolomeo was not a strict Aristotelian in any absolute sense. And how could he be? It is a romantic notion that any present can transform itself into the image of the past. It can do this only insofar as it warps the past to its own mentality while convincing itself that it has correctly understood it. We will see that Tolomeo often interpreted Aristotle in ways that would have baffled the ancient philosopher. Sometimes he may have done this deliberately, in order to provide authority for his pronouncements. Other times, perhaps in most cases in which he misread Aristotle,

¹ I argue this in my article 'Aristotle's *Politics* and Ptolemy of Lucca', *Vivarium*, 40 (2002), 103–36.

² Charles Till Davis, 'Roman Patriotism and Republican Propaganda: Ptolemy of Lucca and Pope Nicholas III', *Speculum*, 50 (1975), 411–33 (p. 416 n. 22).

even if this seems unlikely to us at first glance, he honestly adapted the alien ideas to his own experience, thinking that in this way he came to a more perfect understanding of the original.

However deeply Tolomeo eventually assimilated the principles of Aristotelian or other classical political theory, he could do this only in so far as he could perceive these ideas as compatible with his fundamental worldview, which emerged inevitably from his faith. The relationship of faith and politics is difficult to assess for any religious political figure, and this is especially so for Tolomeo. For this reason I will not approach my analysis of Tolomeo's political thought from his ideas on politics as developed in his most mature political work. Rather, in the succeeding chapters, I will begin with his views of the origin and nature of human beings, the natural world, and the first governments, especially through the lens of his commentary on the six days of Creation, *De operibus sex dierum*. This will direct us to a discussion of his beliefs about women, gender, and the family and then to God's plan for world history and the place of government in history. The natural progression from this does not yet lead to secular government and political participation, but rather to the place of the more important entities in an eschatological sense: what Tolomeo called the Fourth Monarchy of the Roman Empire (which maintained a crucial role even after the end of its supremacy) and the Fifth and final Monarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Only then will we be prepared to go on to the more familiar topics of political thought usually associated with Tolomeo: types of government, the city and citizen, the idea of polity as organism, the best government, republicanism, and civic humanism.

The interaction of all these factors is complex, and I do not want to suggest a strict development in his published works from a strictly religious worldview to one informed by Greek political thought. The various viewpoints are intertwined in differing proportions throughout Tolomeo's work. It will be obvious, for example, when we look at his views on Creation, God's plan, and eschatological society that his religious perspective was strongly informed by Aristotelian, classical, and medieval political thought. His book of biblical exegesis is pervaded with references to Aristotelian and other ancient sources together with the Islamic and Jewish commentaries used by scholastics, especially those found in the work of Thomas Aquinas. Nor do I want to reduce the factors in his mature thought to these two. Clearly, for example, his family and experience with the life of the city were also key. By approaching our subject in as complete a manner as possible we will have the best opportunity to understand the significance of politics and government in his mind.

I begin with an expanded treatment of two topics central to the medieval worldview, topics that I mentioned in passing in the companion volume — divine intervention in history and astrology — and then discuss what we can learn about Tolomeo's attitudes toward history from reading his historical work, *Annales*.

In the companion volume I suggested that Tolomeo, presumably deliberately, kept his Aristotelian naturalism and Christian supernaturalism separate, invoking the former consistently in his political, theoretical, and secular historical works (except for the idea found in all his works of a moral force in history bringing evil people to a bad end), and the latter on some occasions in his religious and ecclesiastical historical ones. This example of conscious evasion of tensions inherent in his thought cuts across works using and not using Aristotle's *Politics*. Most interestingly, *De operibus sex dierum* frequently argues both from the *Politics* and the supernatural, the latter, as I mentioned in *Life and Works*, especially in its insistence on denying natural causation to comets and other phenomena portrayed as divine signs.

De operibus sex dierum treats this theoretically, but a few specific examples from Tolomeo's other writings will clarify his different approaches in the different kinds of work. In historical works like *Annales*, while he notes several eclipses and comets, and sometimes describes them in detail, he does not normally ascribe any special significance to them. Usually he reports them without comment, as with the eclipses of 1140 and 1190, each of which is briefly noted between two rather neutral events. He tends to describe those during his lifetime more vividly, even the one of 3 June 1239, which could possibly be a very early memory, but which he must have heard his family talk about, when 'there was an eclipse of the sun more complete than any eclipse in memory, because the opposition of the moon between us and the sun produced such great obscurity that the stars were seen in the sky just as in the twilight of the day and night, and it was said that this was because the opposition was in the tail of the [constellation of the] dragon'.³ What follows is a narrative of the ups and downs of Emperor Frederick II in Italy, which are not particularly significant in the context of an omen, nor does Tolomeo relate them explicitly to the eclipse. Likewise, though the sun 'was made the colour of black and blood', in 1247, he does not report any particularly important events then. Comets had no effects either. He does not report anything of importance in 1264, when at twilight, 'A great comet appeared in August in the sign of Cancer

³ Tolomeo Fiadoni (Tholomeus von Lucca), *Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca* [henceforth *Annales*], ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, n.s., 8 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1930; repr. 1955), 1239, pp. 122–23.

proceeding a little against the meridian, until it approached the constellation of Orion, and then it directed its tail now in one direction and now in another, and it lasted many months. Its tail extended itself in length through a quarter part of our hemisphere'.⁴

The closest that he comes to investing comets with historical portent is with respect to two, one of which he himself witnessed, that he juxtaposed with the coming of Charles of Valois in 1301:

In the same year in September a comet appeared in the west in the sign of Scorpio, which is the home of Mars, which sometimes emitted a tail to the east, sometimes to the north; and this was after the arrival of Charles, brother of the King of France in Tuscany and it lasted for a month. Moreover, they report that there was another that had appeared in the east at the same time, but I did not see it. In the same year the said Lord Charles came to Rome at the mandate of the highest pontiff Boniface VIII.⁵

At first glance, there seems to be no reason to intersperse reports of these comets and two events involving Charles except to assert their significance. But though Tolomeo goes on to describe the violence in Florence, which he witnessed, he never makes the connection explicit.

In contrast, in religious or ecclesiastical historical works like *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, comets and other signs appear as supernatural omens quite frequently; sometimes they could even signify more than one thing. One of the greatest comets ever seen appeared in 1264 just as Pope Urban IV fell ill and lasted until his death. Tolomeo adds that the comet could also have been another sign of the coming of Charles of Anjou the next year.⁶ Contrast his attitude here to his neutral reporting of the same comet in *Annales*. In 1285, a comet signified both the defeat and death of King Philip III of France and the Tartar attacks on the Byzantine Empire.⁷ Tolomeo also often reports other 'prodigies of nature', especially eclipses, sunspots, and the like, as signs of important events. Interestingly, almost all of these events are clustered in the early medieval centuries from about 600 until the late twelfth century, with most of them in the ninth and tenth centuries. After that, Tolomeo mentions only a couple of comets. There is

⁴ *Annales*, 1264, p. 149.

⁵ *Annales*, 1301, pp. 237–38.

⁶ Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolomaeus Lucensis), *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, ed. by Ludovico A. Muratori, 28 vols (Milan: S. Lapim, 1723–51), XI (1727), cols 751–1242 (XXII.26, col. 1155).

⁷ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXIV.17, col. 1193.

no way to know whether he was more critical about contemporary reports or whether there simply were fewer of them in more sophisticated times.

Closely connected to heavenly signs is the astrological influence of heavenly bodies on human affairs. I have likewise noted a different attitude to these in the different kinds of works, with the secular-historical and political works having a more naturalistic explanation of such influence, yet seeing it as altering human will, and with the religious and ecclesiastical historical works viewing the heavens as a theatre for divine signs, yet exerting influence only on things, not people's will.

The chief example Tolomeo gives in the political works for the influence of the heavens is the nature of peoples in different lands. Aristotle also wrote about this, but Tolomeo's primary authority was that other Ptolemy, Claudius Ptolemaeus, the second-century CE Alexandrian astronomer and geographer:

Regions differ in their human inhabitants, who, like other living things, have diverse physical constitutions and ways of living according to the configuration of the heavens, as Tolomeo tells us in *Quadripartitus*. Plants, for example, adapt to the nature of the region to which they are transplanted, as do fish and animals. As it is with other living things, so it is with humans.⁸

Tolomeo interprets Ptolemy to mean that the stars circumscribe the exercise of free will possible to any people.⁹ This implies in particular that national character is not genetic, nor even in the end transmitted culturally, and that those who move into an astrological zone will eventually and inevitably acquire the local character. Thus, the many migrations of peoples common in Europe did not change the natures of people living in a particular place. The transformation of immigrants can happen quite quickly, as Tolomeo's example of Charles of Anjou's army in the 1260s shows: 'The nature of Gauls who move to Sicily becomes like that of the Sicilians. This is apparent since, as the histories relate, the Gauls populated this island three times — first in the time of Charlemagne, second three

⁸ Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemaeus Lucensis), *De regimine principum ad regem Cypri*, in Thomas Aquinas, *Opuscula omnia necnon opera minora, Tomus primus: Opuscula philosophica*, ed. by R. P. Joannes Perrier (Paris: Lethielleux, 1949), pp. 221–445 (IV.8.3; since there are many editions, I cite by book, chapter, and paragraph number instead of by page), citing Ptolemy, *Quadripartitus*, II.3–4: 'regiones diversificantur quantum ad homines, et in complexione et in modo vivendi, sicut caetera viventia secundum aspectum caeli, ut Ptolemaeus tradit in Quadripart. Si enim plantae transferuntur ad aliam regionem, ad eius naturam convertuntur: simile est de piscibus et animalibus. Sicut ergo de viventibus, ita et de hominibus.' It would be pleasant, if silly, to read this as an endorsement of biological evolution.

⁹ *De regimine principum*, II.8.4; see also II.9.6.

hundred years later in the time of Robert Guiscard, and now in our own times by King Charles — and they have already soaked up the Sicilian nature.¹⁰ Another of Tolomeo's favourite examples of local natures was the Romans, who, he declares, were born under the sign of Mars, and consequently always difficult to subject to a ruler and avid to expand their own territory.¹¹ The Franks and Germans also are just as they were when Julius Caesar and Aimoinus wrote about them.¹²

Astrology offered a way to rationalize the irrational and naturalize the supernatural, but Tolomeo almost never tries to do this or even to explain specific events through astrology in the historical and political theoretical works. Almost all his references to it, and all in *De regimine principum*, refer to national differences. Only twice in *Annales* does Tolomeo ascribe earthly events to celestial phenomena, but one of them is quite significant, coming at the very end of the book, in the *annus terribilis* of 1303, when 'there was a conjunction of Mars with Saturn, and three times they were conjoined through the retrograde [motion] of both, both being in the Virgin. Jupiter being retrograde it happened twice directly; on account of which in that year many following evils were effected.'¹³ Of these evils, Tolomeo mentions only the decapitation of some of the best Florentine Guelphs and Ghibellines and the renewed struggle of Boniface VIII with the King of France. *Annales* ends abruptly with Boniface's confirmation of the Emperor Albert, but as we know, the year continued with the French capture and humiliation of Boniface at Anagni and his death soon after.

The other instance is neither historically significant nor definitive, but it provides one of Tolomeo's most colourful anecdotes, which once again includes a feast, this time without its usual pleasant associations:

At this time it is reported that a wonder happened in parts of Scythia concerning a certain ruler, who while he sat at a feast, suddenly was surrounded by a multitude of mice, and when they had come in a great number, they rushed up to him alone. Wanting to escape

¹⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.3: 'Gallici enim, qui se transferunt in Siciliam, ad naturam applicantur Siculorum: quod quidem apparet, quia, ut narrant historiae, iam ter est populata dicta insula de praefata gente. Primo enim tempore Caroli magni; secundo ad trecentos annos tempore Roberti Guiscard; et temporibus nostris per regem Carolum, qui iam induerunt ipsorum naturam.'

¹¹ *De regimine principum*, II.8.4.

¹² *De regimine principum*, II.9.6, citing Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War*, VI.11–24, and Aimoinus Floriac, *History of the Franks*, preface, chap. 2.

¹³ *Annales*, 1303, pp. 241–42: 'Eodem anno fuit coniuncti per retrogradum utriusque existentes ambo in Virgine. Iuppiter etiam existens retrogradus et bis directus factus est; propter quod in isto anno multi mali effectus sunt sequuti.'

the infestation of mice, he got on a certain small boat, pointed himself away from land, and departed into the sea. But he could not prevent the mice from following, and, attaching themselves to the boat, they gnawed at it. When the sailors saw this they returned to port. Suddenly another multitude of mice approached and together with those who had gone to sea, they so severely attacked the said ruler that they killed him, piercing him from his belt to his heart, and gnawing and perforating his heart and ate it all when he was dead. But if one should ask the cause, it could be a constellation or the judgement of God. It is reported that in certain places it happens that if a leopard wounds a human being, the mice who are in those places attack the human being, and urinate on him in the place of the wound. One reads that a certain ruler was consumed by lice.¹⁴

Tolomeo took the story, though not the explanation and some details like the gnawing of the heart and the second herd of mice, from Martinus Polonus, who identifies the victim as a Polish ruler.¹⁵ Tolomeo does not explain directly why he invoked the stars, but the stories of the micturating mice and the anthropophagous lice suggest that celestial influence shaped the character of mice in Scythia and lice in another location so that they acted in this manner. In any case, Tolomeo associates the stars with rodent behaviour, not the fate of the ruler. It is likely, according to his principles, that Tolomeo understood even the calamitous events of 1303 as the effect of the unfortunate conjunction on the bodily humours, a natural effect that maintains the integrity of the laws of nature. In none of his works does Tolomeo ascribe the fate, good or bad, of an individual unambiguously to astrological causes.

The other possibility that Tolomeo mentions is that the mice were agents of God. If so, he probably sent them because the ruler was a tyrant, demonstrating

¹⁴ *Annales*, 1074, pp. 12–13: ‘Hoc tempore tale fertur accidisse monstrum in partibus Scitie de quodam principe, qui cum sederet in convivio, subito a multitudine murium circumvallatur; et cum venissent in tanto numero, de nullo curabant nisi de isto. Ille autem volens effugere murium infestationem quandam naviculam intravit et in mari se opponens a terra se elongabat; quod quidem facere non potuit, ut Martinus refert, quin mures ipsum sequerentur, applicantesque navi ipsam corrodabant; quod videntes naute ad portum redeunt, et subito alia venit multitudo murium et cum illis, qui mare intraverant, dictum principem sic invadunt, quod ipsum occidunt, perforantes in cintura usque ad cor, et ipsum cor perforantes et corrodentes; et ipso mortuo totum comedunt. Quod si causa queritur, esse potuit vel constellatio vel Dei iudicium. Fertur etiam, ut refert idem Martinus, in quibusdam partibus accidere, quod, si leopardus vulneret hominem, mures, qui sunt in illis partibus, hominem invadunt, et in loco vulneris ipsum demingunt. De quoddam etiam principe legitur, quod a pediculis sit consumpta.’

¹⁵ Martinus Oppaviensis (Martinus Polonus), *Chronicon de romanis pontificum et imperatorum*, ed. by Ludwig Weiland, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicorum*, 22 (Hannover: Hahn, 1872), pp. 377–482 (Imperatores, p. 468).

the working of Tolomeo's conviction of a moral force acting in history to see to it that often those who do bad things end their lives badly. Most frequently Tolomeo saw the hand of God in history punishing evil secular rulers. Of all those to deserve a bad end, the most notorious for Tolomeo were the last Hohenstaufen. *Annales* describes Frederick II's death as ignominious, suffocation with a cushion by his illegitimate son Manfred. *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* extends this to the rest of them: two of Frederick II's sons died in jail (one by Frederick's own hand), Manfred poisoned his half-brother Conrad, and Manfred died excommunicate in a battle with Charles of Anjou, who later decapitated Conrad's son Conradin.¹⁶ The fact that some of Tolomeo's accounts of the deaths are fanciful suggests that he was anxious to find a bad end for a bad ruler. Another prominent ruler, King Stephen of England, was childless and had a bad death, because he sinned by depriving Henry I's daughter Matilda of the throne.¹⁷

A ruler's evil could doom even his innocent children, as with Emperor Henry V, who died childless because of the actions of his father, Henry IV, against the church.¹⁸ Count Guy de Montfort, son of the more famous Simon (who, with another son, had already died 'ignominiously' according to Tolomeo for creating bad conditions in England) and his family were especially singled out for punishment. In 1271 (Tolomeo says 1270), while serving as Tuscan vicar for King Charles at the papal Curia in Viterbo, he attacked and killed Henry, son of Richard, King of the Romans, in revenge for his father's death at the hands of King Henry III of England, Richard's brother. This happened in a church, 'at the foot of the priest', for which reason, 'henceforth he was always unhappy and, captured in the sea by Roger of Loria in Sicily, he died a bitter death. His wife committed adultery ignominiously, and since she had two daughters, she and the daughters were deprived of the whole county'.¹⁹

The worst part of Guy's actions was doubtless the sacrilege of killing Henry in a church, and *Annales* is full of examples of bad deaths or bad fortune resulting

¹⁶ *Annales*, 1250, p. 131; Tolomeo Fiadoni (attr. Nicolaus Roselli de Aragon), *Tractatus de iurisdictione ecclesiae super regnum Apuliae et Siciliae* (henceforth *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*), in *Miscellanea*, I: *Monumenta historica tum sacra tum profane*, ed. by Étienne Baluze and Giovanni Domenico Mansi (Lucca: Riccomini, 1761), pp. 468–73 (ti. 4, p. 470b, ti. 3, pp. 470a–b).

¹⁷ *Annales*, 1155, p. 59.

¹⁸ *Annales*, 1123, p. 42.

¹⁹ *Annales*, 1263, p. 148; 1270, p. 168: 'ad pedes sacerdotis occidet eum, ex quo ab inde semper erat infelix et amara morte captus in mari a Rogerio del Loria in Sicilia moritur, et uxor sua ignominiose adulteravit, et cum haberet duas filias, ipsa et filie quasi toto comitatu privantur'.

from an offence against the church. Things went badly for another Henry, son of the King of Castile and senator of Rome, ever since he violated the trust of Romans who had deposited goods in the churches.²⁰ But worse happened to real schismatics: the imperial antipope Buridanus was made to ride a camel backwards, using the tail as a rein; he was then shut up in a fortress where he suffered an ignoble death.²¹ Four more antipopes supported by Frederick Barbarossa perished by bad deaths shortly after Pope Alexander III defeated them.²² The same fate awaited the Roman clerics who rebelled against Paschal II in 1110.²³

In several instances Tolomeo seems to have been searching for some bad deeds to explain the gruesome deaths that certain decent rulers suffered. This is especially notable in the case of two successive contemporary popes, John XXI (1276–77) and Nicholas III (1277–80). John is the only pope Tolomeo singles out for a bad end in *Annales*, though he tells us of Nicholas and others in *Historia ecclesiastica nova*. It is puzzling why Tolomeo picked on this one pope, since John's short papacy was not particularly notorious. Tolomeo says that he promoted relatives, but he says the same thing of other popes whom he mostly admired. Tolomeo denigrates John for being 'full of Spanish spirit' and proclaims that God struck him down for his precipitous actions and hatred of the religious orders, but he also says that he promoted four Dominicans and Franciscans to the cardinalate, and sent the masters of these orders on an important Spanish mission. The only precipitous action Tolomeo mentions besides John's excessive willingness to do favours is his revocation of a decree that mandated the seclusion of the cardinals during papal elections, which his predecessor had already suspended and Nicholas III did not restore. Tolomeo may have known John personally, since the descriptions of him are more colourful and substantial than those of most other popes, especially if we add what Tolomeo wrote in *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, where for example he identifies flaws in John's character, such as his rashness in speech and his willingness to let everyone know his real self. Still, Tolomeo praises him for his generosity to scholars and his willingness to talk to them whether they were rich or poor.

Direct knowledge could mean that there was some unknown personal antipathy between the two, but more likely the manner of John's death, rather than

²⁰ *Annales*, 1268, pp. 162–63.

²¹ *Annales*, 1119, p. 39.

²² *Annales*, 1161, pp. 63–64.

²³ *Annales*, 1110, p. 32.

his actions, led Tolomeo to conclude that God destined him for a bad death, and this conviction strengthened his dislike of some of John's policies or caused him to look for some to dislike. As Tolomeo tells the story, John was asleep when the room in which he slept collapsed on top of him. He was pulled out barely alive, but he died shortly afterward. The details in *Historia ecclesiastica nova* are slightly different: just before he died John had fulminated against the religious orders and, retiring to his room, broke into laughter, 'as if glorying in himself, when suddenly the room fell upon him and crushed him between wood and stones. He died six days after the incident, frustrated in his intentions, because he believed and in his own wisdom was confident, as he sometimes said, that he could enjoy [the papal] dignity for a long time.'²⁴ Perhaps in the years between the two works Tolomeo was able to come up with some more convincing explanations of the gruesome death.

Tolomeo's account of Nicholas III (1277–80) confirms my interpretation. Although Nicholas was young, and according to Tolomeo expected to be pope for thirty years, he died within three years, after suddenly being struck speechless with apoplexy. Since Tolomeo had so many good things to say about him, and some of their ideas were even similar enough for Charles Till Davis to associate Tolomeo with Nicholas's Roman patriotic agenda,²⁵ how can we explain this unusual and unpleasant death? *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, though not *Annales*, suggests that Tolomeo found an answer. Nicholas, it says, was healthy and very moderate in his personal habits, but had the flaw of caring too much for his family and used the pretext of heresy to destroy some castles and obtain some property for relatives: 'And in this deed he erred, because God notably punished him, because he died there [in a captured castle] a singular and novel death, deprived suddenly of all sense and movement.'²⁶

I mention all these matters here so as to reiterate Tolomeo's non-Aristotelian and non-naturalistic tendencies. Aristotle might have approved of Tolomeo's characterization and explanation of natural character, which is similar, given the

²⁴ *Annales*, 1276–77, pp. 183–85; *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXIII.21–25, cols 1176–79. From XXIII.24, col. 1178: 'quasi glorians in se ipso; et tunc subito camera cecidit super eum, et inter ligna et lapides collisus. sexta die post casum expirat, sua intentione frustratus, quia credebat, et in sua sapientia confidebat, sicut ipse interdum dicebat, longo tempore ista posse dignitate gaudere.'

²⁵ Davis, 'Roman Patriotism', pp. 411–33.

²⁶ *Annales*, 1280, p. 192; *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXIII.31, col. 1182: 'Et in facto isto erravit, quia notabiliter Deus ipsum punivit, quia ibi singulari et nova moritur morte, privatus subito omni sensu et motu.'

shift from Greece to Italy, to Aristotle's explanation of the distinction between civilized and barbarian, between those suited to self-government and those destined to be ruled by tyrants, or of the natural effect of heavenly bodies on events or humours, but he would not have looked with favour on an avenging personal God, found in all Tolomeo's works, or divine signs of earthly events, found in the religious and ecclesiastical political works. Tolomeo ignores the tensions that exist between the two approaches, but in fact supernatural interventions are rare in any of his works, or at least they are brought in only in certain kinds of situation in a manner that does not much affect his usual naturalistic analysis of worldly events, the actions or development of particular governments, or his political theory in general.

Before turning to his more general theories I want to look briefly at Tolomeo's major secular historical work, *Annales*, to see what we can glean from it about Tolomeo's political ideas and sympathies in a situation in which he was not writing theoretically. There is not very much to work with, since the chronicle tends to present major events without much comment. For the most part it records battles between cities, and the reports consist mostly of the lists of cities involved, the sieges or battles, the result, and sometime the magnitude of casualties. There is almost nothing on the internal affairs of cities or kingdoms, except for references to struggles between Guelphs and Ghibellines, and even there he rarely gives substantial explanations.

The preponderance of information in *Annales* is about Lucca, and this is particularly true for the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In this early period, Tolomeo took much care to enumerate the many privileges that the emperors or popes bestowed on Lucca, and the privileges emperors confirmed that had originally been bestowed by one of their predecessors. Even more prominent than privileges involving the freedom of the city from imperial government are ones involving rights to free trade and the right to coin money.²⁷

All information on governmental institutions and the class interests they represent is indirect. The first mention of consuls comes in 1126, when the Margrave (Marquis) of Tuscany conceded certain lands to the consuls of Lucca,²⁸ but Tolomeo does not use the word *commune* until 1242, again in the context of a grant of land.²⁹ He first mentions a *podestà* in 1188,³⁰ and in subsequent years

²⁷ *Annales*, 1181–82, pp. 76–77 and elsewhere.

²⁸ *Annales*, 1126, p. 44.

²⁹ *Annales*, 1142, p. 51.

³⁰ *Annales*, 1188, p. 83.

usually names the current one. In 1287, the then *podestà*, Bernardino da Porto, was forced to flee because of fear of the zealous syndic charged with evaluating his performance.³¹ There is only one mention of priors, in 1292.³² Another common communal body, the *parlementum* is referred to only with respect to a 'public *parlementum*' in which the merchants and money-changers of Bologna swore to use Luccan money.³³ Likewise, rectors are only mentioned with respect to a city subject to Lucca, Montesummano, which agreed to receive their *podestà* and rectors from Lucca.³⁴

Tolomeo does often refer to the division and clashes between nobles and *popolo*, though not usually in a governmental context, and the same applies to the *società* of the *popolo*, to which he alludes but does not name, and to alliances between the nobles and rich *popolani*.³⁵ The one scene of concord he depicts between *popolo* and nobles is a superficial one, since Tolomeo reports that in the very next year discord arose between them because of the inequity of assessments for the support of communal expenses.³⁶ He does often refer to the Guelph and Ghibelline conflicts, but does not analyse its significance deeply, or even mention their existence in Lucca until this comes out almost as an aside in the wake of Montaperti in 1261.³⁷ He explains the emergence of the Black and White Guelphs superficially as a local family dispute in Pistoia in 1285 and the spread of the parties through personal loyalties:

In the same year, a commotion arose in Pistoia among the Cancellari on the occasion of a quarrel, since Dore, son of Lord Guillelmus Amadoris struck Lord Vanni, son of Lord Gualfredus, and cut off three fingers of his hand, and then the brother of Lord Vanni cut off Dore's hand, and thus the house was divided. Whence many evils of the Pistoians arose from this, and in consequence in all Tuscany. For after two years or more Lord Albertinus Vereggellensis of the party of Lord Vanni, was killed, then Lord Dore of the other party, then Lord Bertacta of the other; for the house was divided between Whites and Blacks and the whole city and the whole of Tuscany in consequence according to friendships, which they had in the cities, and especially in Florence and Lucca, and this perseveres to today.

³¹ *Annales*, 1287, p. 213.

³² *Annales*, 1292, p. 223.

³³ *Annales*, 1180, p. 75.

³⁴ *Annales*, 1219, p. 108.

³⁵ See, e.g., *Annales*, 1069, p. 8; 1188, pp. 83–84; 1203, p. 93; 1257, p. 139. See also the historical and biographical chapters in the companion volume.

³⁶ *Annales*, 1293–94, pp. 225–26.

³⁷ *Annales*, 1261, p. 144.

Another manuscript of *Annales* says: 'And thus the house was divided into two parties, and the most atrocious war arose, and the whole city in consequence was lacerated and similarly it was divided into two parts, as will be apparent below.'³⁸

Since *Annales* is, in large part, a record of never-ending conflicts with no consistent victors, it is tempting to see Tolomeo's intent to be what he states at the beginning: to teach contempt for the world by showing the unstable nature of worldly affairs. Only once does he explicitly return to this theme, in chronicling the death of Charles of Anjou, who had been such an important figure in his narrative: 'Crossing from the port of Pisa he arrived in Apulia, and there he became sick and died in a few days, and thus he was frustrated in his intentions and passed from this light in a certain desolation of mind, not without the great example with princes, that there are such vicissitudes in mundane things.'³⁹ Here he repeats the words *vicissitudes* and *intentions*, which figure in the meditation on vanity in the introductory paragraphs. And yet, despite all this, I do not believe that this was Tolomeo's real belief, except in a conventional way. It is true that we can not be sure of achieving worldly goals, but Tolomeo shows a real pride in Lucca's political independence and consistent support of the church. He reports numerous details that seem to have no real purpose except to showcase Luccan prestige, privileges, and achievements. Although he at times reports Luccan defeats, this is fairly rare, and he does not dwell on them, usually going on immediately to show how the city recovered from the loss. Even in one case when Lucca went against Pope Nicholas III, whom he often admired, he proudly describes how Lucca was able to outsmart the Pope's legate, who was giving them trouble about some of their possessions, through a clever choice of *podestà*.⁴⁰ What he disliked was the evils caused by factionalism, which he ascribes either to family

³⁸ *Annales*, 1285, pp. 209–10: 'Eodem anno exorta est turbatio Pistorii inter Cancellarios occasione rixe, quia Dore filius domini Guillelmi Amadoris percussit dominum Vannem filium domini Gualfredi et amputavit [sibi] tres digitos manus, frater vero dicti domini Vanni amputavit manum dicto Doro, et sic domus divisa est. Unde multa ex hoc exorta sunt mala Pistorii et per consequens in tota Tuscia. Nam postea ad duos annos vel ultra occisus fuit dominus Albertinus Veregellensis de parte domini Vanni, ulterius dominus Dore de alia parte, postea dominus Bertacta de alia; divisa enim est domus inter Albos et Nigros et tota civitas ac tota per consequens Tuscia secundum amicitias, quas in civitatibus habebant, et precipue de Florentia et Luca, eademque adhuc perseverat'. Manuscript A has: 'Sique domus dividitur in duas partes, et atrocissima guerra exoritur, et tota civitas per consequens laceratur et in duas partes similiter dividitur, ut infra melius apparebit.'

³⁹ *Annales*, 1283, p. 202.

⁴⁰ *Annales*, 1279, pp. 190–91.

squabbles or class conflict. And yet, *Annales* lacks what Lauro Martines identifies as a common characteristic of thirteenth-century chroniclers: the identification of the constant troubles with the moral failings of the citizens.⁴¹ While Tolomeo does not display the overt partisanship of some fourteenth- and fifteenth-century chroniclers, he did choose his materials in a way that presented Lucca and its government in a favourable light. We may regret that he did not say more about its government, but he doubtless felt that such matters did not have a place in a chronicle of events. While we could not begin to derive from the *Annales* what we know from *De regimine principum* were Tolomeo's political beliefs at this very time, what he wrote there is not in any way incompatible with them.

Tolomeo's treatment of history in *Annales* and *Historia ecclesiastica nova* and his analysis of empire and papacy in those works and the treatises specifically devoted to this are in general rather traditional, and this explains why it is so startling to go from these to looking at his political ideas in *De regimine principum*, which are remarkable and highly original. What is it that can account for these new ideas? To answer this we must first look at several of the conflicts within Tolomeo's thought that I have mentioned, particularly with regard to his view of human nature and God's plan for human history.

⁴¹ Lauro Martines, 'Political Violence in the Thirteenth Century', in *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, ed. by Lauro Martines (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 331–53 (p. 333).

HUMAN ORIGINS, NATURE, AND THE FIRST GOVERNMENTS

Tolomeo was able to avoid addressing the conflict between his Christian supernaturalism and Aristotelian naturalism, and keep the conflict itself largely invisible, by separating them into different works. He was not so easily able to avoid the conflict between the standard Christian-Augustinian model of the nature of politics and that of Aristotle. In fact, we can read much of *De regimine principum* as a lengthy, if not ultimately successful, struggle to reconcile them.¹

The tension arose from Tolomeo's simultaneous acceptance of incompatible approaches to understanding the final end of humankind, the nature of humans as they were created by God, and the way this changed through original sin. Tolomeo considered human nature most fully in his work on Creation, *De operibus sex dierum*, and it is there we must first look for the roots of his conflict. This work is not merely an exegesis of the text of the first chapter and a half of Genesis, but a comprehensive treatment of issues arising from it. Its longest subdivision, Treatise 13, concerns human psychology and the nature of the human soul, and other sections include lengthy analyses of what it means that human beings were created in God's image, as well as excursions on geography and the nature of various animals. The greater part of the work concerns animate beings, and the greater part of that, human beings. Most hexamers, like the contemporary but shorter and little-known one of Giles of Rome,² devote much more space proportionally

¹ I argued this previously in *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 99.

² Giles of Rome, *Hexameron* (Venice: [n. pub.], 1521).

to the mechanics and meaning of inanimate creation and much less to the details of human nature and the implications of this for the social and political life of the species. Perhaps because Tolomeo had little training in the Aristotelian scientific literature he was content to cite the views of other writers on the physical universe and devote his energy to those issues of greater interest to himself. Much more than the authors of other hexamera Tolomeo engaged with the complex social and political issues of the original human society and how this was transformed after sin.

In this endeavour he frequently used the language of Aristotelian political thought, and so, although I will not discuss this language in detail until later, I must introduce several key terms. At times Aristotle used the familiar sixfold schema of government, based on whether the ruling group is one (monarchy or tyranny), few (aristocracy or oligarchy), or many (polity or democracy) and whether it rules for the common good or for its own private good.³ Sometimes Aristotle distinguished between these forms of rule and what I have called modes of rule, which refer to the way the ruling group exercises power: political, regal, household, and despotic.⁴ Aristotle usually associated political rule with alternation of office among a free and equal people, regal rule with the absolute rule of one person over a free but unequal people, and despotic rule as absolute rule over natural slaves. Political and regal rule exist to benefit the subjects, despotic rule does so incidentally but exists primarily for the benefit of the master. Household rule, a general name for rule within a family, is not really a mode at all; within it Aristotle discovered that analogues of all the modes of rule were represented by the various family relationships.⁵ Tolomeo used both these schemata. Although he did not always follow Aristotle's definitions, he emphasized the modal categories, which he believed were more basic.

For Tolomeo, human beings are the purpose and end of Creation. The three parts of the human soul — memory, understanding, and will — bear the image of the Holy Trinity, in the same way as a coin bears the image of Caesar.⁶ This meta-

³ Aristotle, *Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelme de Moerbeka* (henceforth *Politics*), ed. by Franciscus Susemihl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1872), I.5.1254a.28, III.7.1279a. There is a similar schema in *Ethics*, VIII.10.1160a–b, where polity is also called 'timocracy'.

⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.1.1252a.

⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.3, 5, 6, 7, 12, III.4.1277b, III.6.1278b. See also my article 'Family, Government, and the Medieval Aristotelians', *History of Political Thought*, 10 (1989), 1–16.

⁶ Tolomeo Fiadoni (Tholomaeus de Luca), *Exaameron, seu De operibus sex dierum tractatus* (cited in the present volume by the correct title, *De operibus sex dierum*), ed. by Thomas Masetti (Siena: S. Bernardino, 1880), IX.1–2, pp. 104–08.

phor, though not original with Tolomeo, reveals the close connection in his mind between the elevated station of our species and authority in the world. Humans, he believed, hold an intermediate place between God and inanimate creation and in their governance of creatures a role analogous to God's rule over the universe. When in Genesis 1. 28 God ordered Adam and Eve to 'subject the earth and exercise lordship over the fishes of the sea and birds of heaven and over all living things upon the earth' he granted them authority, absolute like his own, over all other earthly creatures. This rule is natural, because the universal hierarchy always rules inferiors through superiors, the imperfect through the perfect. Human prudence is universal and essential, whereas that of animals is limited and merely situational. Originally animals naturally obeyed all humans; that they do not do this now, and that we do not always obey God, stems from our disharmony with nature as a consequence of sin. This taints all our abilities, but the original condition shows forth in the obedience of birds to holy men and their immunity to beasts and serpents.⁷ Sin affects only the efficacy of our rule; it does not remove our position with respect to animals or our rights to command them. In both *De operibus sex dierum* and *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo cites Aristotle's comments on the naturalness of hunting as support of this right.⁸

This explanation of our absolute power over animals cannot be extended to justify a similar rule of some human beings over others. Tolomeo did believe that some forms of human self-rule are natural, but unlike Giles of Rome and many others, he did not teach that all rule grounded in nature was absolute. We can find a more limited natural rule with implications for human government in Tolomeo's treatment of the rule of angels, which comes up in his discussion of the differing hierarchical orderings of the angels found in pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory the Great. Pseudo-Dionysius placed the angelic order called Powers over that called Rules, while Gregory did the reverse. Tolomeo argued that this discrepancy epitomizes the different approach to angelic government of the two writers, and in analogy to forms of human governance: 'Therefore those two doctors ordain those orders of angels differently, Dionysius politically, but Gregory according to despotic custom.' Powers are like *podestà*, executive officials in the representative northern Italian communes, while Rules correspond to feudal

⁷ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.6–7, pp. 115–16. Though the comment about holy men and animals brings Francis of Assisi to mind, and, though Tolomeo likely thought of Francis as well, he actually cites Bede's gloss on Genesis for support.

⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.8.1256a.30–b.23; *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.7, p. 116; *De regimine principum*, II.6.2, III.9.1, III.9.3.

princes.⁹ Tolomeo was not absolutely clear how he determined these characterizations, but it derived at least in part from the coincidence of language: the same word, *potestas*, denotes both ‘power’ and ‘podestà’, and although *principatus* means rule in general, it commonly has overtones of monarchical authority.

At first reading it is surprising to learn that Tolomeo opted for Gregory’s probable correctness, since in his political works he strongly favoured political over despotic rule. A closer look reveals that the two situations are not at all analogous to him, because the suitability and nature of despotism in the celestial hierarchy says nothing about what was to Tolomeo a vastly different state of affairs in postlapsarian human government. First, the way he normally defines despotic government — an absolute rule over natural slaves existing primarily for the master’s benefit — is appropriate for angels, presumably because their purpose is precisely to execute God’s commands, serving for his benefit and purpose and not their own. Following the defection of the fallen angels in their first act after their creation, angels could no longer sin or even desire anything against the will of God, which means that their irresistible inclination is, like that of animals and inanimate objects, always to act in accord with nature, that is, God.¹⁰ Since this is the good of any creature, God’s rule serves their individual good as well, though only incidentally. This is the definition of despotic rule.

Second, and this has even more implications for human governance, despotic rule among the angels does not impose servitude on its subjects as it does among humans. Instead, it consists of counselling and directing.¹¹ Government and hierarchy are necessary because angels are inherently unequal in ability and grace, but coercion is not necessary because of the perfect harmony within the angelic orders and between the angels and God. This is a key difference between angels and humans, at least after sin, and it is what makes despotic rule not an evil form in

⁹ *De operibus sex dierum*, III.9, pp. 45–46: ‘Differentur ergo ordinant isti duo Doctores hos Angelorum ordines, quia D. Dionysius secundum materiam politice, Gregorius vero more dispotico.’

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.q63.6. Aquinas argues that among angels, who were created in grace, the first meritorious act of free will would have led to happiness; therefore, the fallen angels could not have completed even one act before defecting. On the other hand, they could not have sinned in the instant of their creation since this would reflect on God or an inherently evil nature.

¹¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.7, p. 116; see also Tolomeo Fiadoni (Tholomeus Lucensis), *Determinatio compendiosa de iurisdictione imperii* (henceforth *De iurisdictione imperii*), ed. by Marius Krammer, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui*, 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1909), pp. 1–65 (chap. 17, p. 36).

this case, even though it is exercised over virtuous and intelligent creatures. Tolomeo chose to call the rule despotic, not regal, because it primarily served God and not the angels, but the fact that he also compared the angels and feudal princes, whom he elsewhere called regal,¹² shows that even at the heavenly level he had the same difficulty distinguishing these two modes of rule that plagued him when he wrote about human government.

Seemingly inconsistently, Tolomeo sometimes calls rule among angels political.¹³ This puzzled me initially, but I think that he meant that although the will of God is transmitted absolutely along the angelic hierarchy, rule within each order is political, as we would expect among an equal and virtuous people. There is even a model for this situation in Tolomeo's other writings — that of a feudal overlord transmitting the imperial will to a city ruled internally by political rule. The rule of God over humans is regal, since it is for the humans' own benefit, so it is interesting that Tolomeo found a model for all the proper modes of rule — political, despotic, and regal — in heaven.

With human beings the situation is different, since they are able to sin. Originally they had a natural inclination to good, which resulted in an individual internal discipline similar to the rule over the angels. In the beginning human 'nature as it were was moved by a certain instinct toward the Lord and toward the good of virtue, and thus it did not need restraints on account of any inordinate motion of concupiscence, since all inferior strengths obeyed reason [...] which does not now happen'.¹⁴ Tolomeo regarded this rule of reason over the body before sin as despotic, since it reduced the body to the absolute control of reason for the good of the soul.¹⁵

As was the case with the angels, since no restraint was necessary before sin to control human beings, there was no need for the servitude of human to human, merely the counselling and directing made necessary by natural inequality in ability and grace and the Aristotelian necessity that any multitude be ordained to a directing principle.¹⁶ Such a government would not need to restrain evil, or even

¹² *De regimine principum*, II.10.3.

¹³ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, p. 211.

¹⁴ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.2, p. 221: 'natura quasi quodam instinctu movebatur in Domini [Dominum?] et in bonum virtutis, et sic non indigebat freno propter aliquem inordinatum concupiscentiae motum, quoniam omnes vires inferiores obediebant rationi[...] quod modo non contigit.'

¹⁵ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, p. 234.

¹⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.7, p. 116, XIV.8, p. 211.

arrange for the management of goods, which were freely available. Nothing could harm people, so they were created naked and did not need to make clothing, as even now, Tolomeo adds, happens in temperate regions like Ethiopia and India.¹⁷ But humans were naturally social and political animals, even before sin,¹⁸ and even those who instinctually seek the good do not immediately know it. According to Aristotle's *Ethics*,¹⁹ this implies that everyone needs to be regulated by laws. Adam's knowledge and natural reason were superior to others, making him best able to counsel and direct. But his primary governing task, as head of the human species, was teaching precepts he got from God during the sleep into which God sent him in Genesis 2, during which he 'entered the divine sanctuary'.²⁰

God's instruction of Adam demonstrates that even perfect natural reason was inherently limited in that it could not of itself derive every precept, such as the prohibition of the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; such injunctions stemmed from the perfect reign of God over the universe, not human rule, although they were to be administered by Adam. Tolomeo gives three reasons for transcendental law: first, to show the limitation of natural human reason and in order to commend obedience to God, which unperverted humanity naturally desires. Second, to show God's love, to give human beings the chance to earn more grace by obeying, in the same way that that a father might impose stricter regulation on the more valued son. Third, to establish from the start that there is to be human government.²¹

Tolomeo does not say this directly, but in promulgating legislation derived both from natural reason and divine revelation, Adam combined what would later be called secular and spiritual authority, making him in some ways a precursor to the pope. What he did write was that Adam's position prefigured Christ's future reign, since Adam received perfect knowledge of nature, enabling him, among other things, to give the appropriate name to each animal.²² This comment is somewhat misleading, since Adam's power here prefigured only one aspect of Christ's, his dominion over all nature, that is, Christ's secular function. The naming of animals occurred before the rapture in which Adam received the divine

¹⁷ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, pp. 234–35.

¹⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, p. 211.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, V; *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, p. 211.

²⁰ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, pp. 211–12; XV.4, p. 229.

²¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, pp. 210–11.

²² *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.3, p. 225.

precepts. Adam's ability to choose appropriate names, therefore, derived from his uncorrupt reason and natural knowledge, identifying this event as part of human rule over humans and the natural world, which was of a different essence from God's rule.

Such rule was free of coercion and was of necessity employed for the good of all human beings. For this reason Tolomeo could not treat it as despotic as he did angelic rule. Most writers of the time, like Giles of Rome,²³ envisioning human rule as a microcosm of divine rule, called it regal monarchy. But Tolomeo, having already outlined various modes of natural rule, equates regal rule with servitude, calls Adam's government political, and denies that his rule was 'full and pure',²⁴ as would be the case in regal or despotic government, in which the ruler has the right to enforce a judgement against unwilling subjects. There is an obvious flaw in this argument: Tolomeo had argued with respect to the angels that there could be an absolute rule when the subjects were inclined by nature to obey. Adam may have had only the function of advising and directing,²⁵ but before sin no person, shown the right, which Adam represented, would refuse to follow it.²⁶ This implies that his rule was absolute even though it did not require coercion, and so regal would initially seem to be a better description of it, even using Tolomeo's definitions. Tolomeo's temperament precluded such an analysis; in all his works he consistently shows such antipathy toward monarchy in any form that he had great difficulty finding a place for it in any good government, even though the authorities he relied upon forced him to concede that it could be beneficial. He made an exception for the pope, in whose place Adam appears at times to stand, and to whom Tolomeo posited a 'regal and sacerdotal lordship'.²⁷ But whenever Tolomeo wrote about someone ruling a specifically secular society, including the one in Eden, he could never defend regal rule for long. More rationally, there is one significant difference between the psychology of humans and angels: although the former possessed the inclination to obey, they had free will and could potentially choose not to obey any ruler, including Adam. So Tolomeo's saying that his rule was political doubtless reflected the reality that if his subjects refused his orders he did not have the right to assure compliance by force.

²³ Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, II.1.14, fol. 154^v.

²⁴ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.5, p. 112.

²⁵ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.7, p. 116.

²⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, p. 211.

²⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.10.2.

Nevertheless, a definite natural hierarchy existed even before sin. Referring to *De iurisdictione imperii* for a more complete treatment and making several points that he would repeat in *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo analyses lordship in Eden:

In those things moreover which are mutually ordained, as Aristotle reports in *Politics*, Book I, it is always necessary that there be another first principle and directing. Moreover, it must not be believed that then all were equal in grace, as is also true among the angels, because indeed the condition of order indicates this, which especially was strong in the first state, just as in the mode confirmed and glorified in the angelic nature. According to Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIX, order is the disposition of equal and unequal things giving their own places to each. Whence it is manifest that the name of order signifies inequality of state.²⁸

De iurisdictione imperii's sole citation of Aristotle's *Politics*, which came in the passage to which *De operibus sex dierum* here refers, demonstrates only a slight familiarity with Aristotelian principles. The passage is part of a 'digression' about the origin of political authority. In most of this treatise, Tolomeo uses arguments from law, medieval practice, and the Bible, typical, except for the dialectical form, of church-state polemics of the previous two centuries. However, when he wanted to answer the objection that, since historically emperors preceded popes, papal authority derives from the imperial, he felt compelled to go back to first principles. Here is *De iurisdictione imperii*'s version of the passage above:

Although in humans there was prelation even in the State of Innocence [...] it is not lordship in so far as this is represented as servitude, because this is penal, but as the office of consulting and directing, just as among the angels, which indeed pertains to humankind, in so far as humans are naturally social animals, whom it is necessary to mutually ordain. But among those which are mutually ordained it is necessary that there always should be one principal and directing, as the Philosopher says in *Politics*, Book I.²⁹

²⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.7, pp. 116–17: 'In hiis autem quae sunt ad invicem ordinata, ut tradit Phil. 1 Politic., oportet semper esse aliud principale, et dirigens primum. Non autem est credendum, quod tunc omnes fuissent pares in gratia, sicut nec Angeli modo, quod quidem hoc indicat ordinis conditio, qui maxime viguisset in primu statu, sicut modo in natura angelica confirmata, et glorificata. Est autem secundum B. Augustinum xix de Civilization. Dei ordo parum disparumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio. Unde manifestum est quod nomen ordinis status inaequalitatem significat.'

²⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, p. 36: 'Licet enim in hominibus etiam in statu innocentie fuisset prelatio [...] non in quantum dominium opponitur servituti, quia hoc est penale, sed officio consulendi et dirigendi, sicut in angelis, quod quidem homini competeat, in quantum homo naturaliter est animal sociale, quem oportet ad invicem ordinare. In hiis autem, quae ad invicem sunt ordinata, oportet semper aliquid esse principale et dirigens, ut philosophus dicit in primo

Tolomeo's defence of government in *De iurisdictione imperii* as rooted in nature even before sin, commonly seen as a major consequence of acquaintance with Aristotle's *Politics*,³⁰ reads differently in this context: his main argument is that since all power is from God there can be no natural claim to rule. God will provide the necessary rule, which, for sinful humans, is usually punitive. Even the necessity for direction is not a novel Aristotelian idea; compare, for example, pseudo-Dionysius's hierarchical ordering of Creation. God as the source of rule potentially undermines Aristotelian naturalism.³¹ Perhaps Aquinas and Tolomeo chose to present humans as 'social' or 'social and political animals', when Aristotle had emphasized their nature as 'political animals', in order to stress the need to live in communities, in contrast to Aristotle's emphasis on participation in government.

After sin, the situation changed, because the body was no longer under the despotic lordship of reason. Instead, a democratic or political relationship subsisted between the two, making it unsure in any particular case which was stronger and dominant.³² Giles of Rome and Tolomeo would have agreed that this rupture of authority made coercion necessary for the first time, but the nature of Adam's rule for Giles remained regal monarchy. For Tolomeo, however, the situation became more complex and subject to many contingencies. This is a subject he does not treat in any detail in *De operibus sex dierum*, since it went beyond the bounds of the days of Creation, but it is a topic he takes up in several other works.

Politice.' The reference is to Aristotle, *Politics*, I.5.1254a.28. Tolomeo's citation of Aristotle for the necessity of rule, but not for humans as social animals, suggests that his source was not Aristotle but Aquinas's similar passage in *Summa theologiae*, I.96.4. Aquinas followed the same pattern, even using 'social animal' instead of his more usual 'social and political animal', or the words with which Moerbeke translated Aristotle's 'political animal': 'civil animal'. In a later, similar passage in *De regimine principum*, III.9.6–7, Tolomeo was clearly using the *Politics* directly, but it contains passages close to the one quoted.

³⁰ See Tilman Struve, 'Die Bedeutung der aristotelischen "Politik" für die natürliche Begründung der staatlichen Gemeinschaft', in *Das publicum politischer Theorie im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Jürgen Miethke, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs: Kolloquien, 21 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), pp. 153–72 (pp. 154–55).

³¹ See J. P. Canning, 'Introduction: Politics, Institutions, and Ideas', in *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 341–66 (pp. 360–62), for this observation about medieval political theorists in general.

³² *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.7, p. 234; XIII.19, p. 192.

Thus, Tolomeo uses his analysis of the story of Creation in *De operibus sex dierum* in a completely different manner from Giles of Rome and most others. For them, human rule was a microcosm of divine rule and the human king was the mirror of God. Sin merely transformed what had been non-coercive regal rule into coercive regal rule, with the only essential change in the nature of the subjects, not in that of the ruler. After sin ended the peaceful coexistence of humans and animals under human command, force was needed for self-protection. Likewise, the loss of natural justice necessitated repressive government to protect humans from each other, to prevent chaos, and to bring people back to God. Referring to the function of punishment, including harm from the newly hostile natural world, Giles of Rome writes: 'God wills harm to exist for the perfection of virtue [...] but virtue is perfected in infirmity according to Paul [...] therefore God wills harm to be such that we are not only punished, corrected, and perfected, but also that we be instructed', because only through instruction can we understand correction and turn toward virtue.³³ After sin, government existed for protection against nature and evil humans, but also for the restoration, to the degree possible, of primordial perfection. According to Giles, this could best be accomplished by a government that reflected the natural order, that is, monarchy. The only difference is that a modern king, unlike King Adam in Eden, must use punishment and coercion in addition to instruction. Though Giles used the Aristotelian terminology of the common good, it was this universal good and not earthly ones that he envisioned. Tolomeo, on the other hand, argued for a difference in essence between divine and human rule, and, as will become clear in *De regimine principum*, advocated when possible the political rule that came naturally to uncorrupted humanity. The common good to which he refers includes both the earthly Aristotelian common good and the eternal Christian one.

Even in *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo sometimes misconstrues Aristotle on the meaning of humans as social and political animals by arguing that what made them such were the needs assailing them in the postlapsarian world — food, clothing, protection, etc. Tolomeo states this explicitly:

The necessity of establishing a city comes first from a consideration of human need, which compels a person to live in society, as is written in Job: 'A person born of woman lives for a brief time filled with many miseries', that is, with the necessities of life that make misery apparent. For this reason human beings are social and political animals by nature, as Aristotle proves.³⁴

³³ Giles of Rome, *Hexameron*, chap. 40, fol. 142^r.

³⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.2: 'Necessitudo [constituendi civitatem] autem apparet primo quidem considerata humana indigentia, per quam cogitur homo in societate vivere quia, ut in Job

Although this is consistent with Aristotle's meaning, it shifts the emphasis from a natural need to participate in government to a natural need to live together in communities. One aspect of the latter is the inherent desire to share one's activities with one's fellow human beings. Tolomeo cites Cicero, Archytas of Tarentum, and Boethius to the effect that no one would do a virtuous act or enjoy even a vision of the universe in the absence of human society or companionship.³⁵ Tolomeo found this need to be as pressing in Eden as it is now, as we will see in the next chapter when we consider his views of the relationship between husband and wife.

It is interesting that Tolomeo chose to cite Cicero in this context — 'nature loves nothing that is solitary'³⁶ — since by this sentiment he rejected what is commonly portrayed as the universal medieval preference for the contemplative versus the active life. For Tolomeo it was only in civil society that natural human needs and, as we will see, virtues could exist, develop, and flourish. One might object that 'civil society' might for Tolomeo easily be extended to include the society of clergy in a church, or the monks in a monastery, but what is most significant is that certain necessary virtues could develop even in such communities only to the degree that they were similar to cities.

Looking at Tolomeo's account of the virtues pertaining to the different parts of the human soul will clarify this conclusion. Of the several different classifications Tolomeo outlines, he primarily considers the soul's division into vegetative (or natural), sensitive, and rational (or intellective) spirits (or souls or appetites).³⁷ The vegetative includes the basic drives of the body, such as reproduction, nutrition, and growth. The sensitive includes more sophisticated bodily facilities, such as the five senses. All living beings possess vegetative and sensitive souls of varying complexity and sophistication; it is only the rational soul that

scribitur: "Homo natus de muliere brevi vivens tempore, repletus multis miseriis," id est necessitatibus vitae in quibus miseria manifestatur; unde secundum naturam est animal sociale sive politicum, ut Philosophus probat in 1 Politicorum.' The references are to Job 14. 1 and Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1253a.1–3. Gianfranco Fioravanti, 'La *Politica* aristotelica nel medioevo: Linee di una ricenzone', *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 52 (1997), 17–29 (p. 26), argues that Giles of Rome exceptionally founded the naturalness of political life in the superior nature of human animals. For more on the emphasis on physical needs see, for example, Fioravanti, *ibid.*, p. 25, and Struve, 'Bedeutung', *passim*.

³⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.3.11.

³⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.3.11, in reference to Cicero, *On Friendship*, p. 23: 'Natura nihil solitarium amat.'

³⁷ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.5, p. 152.

makes us distinctively human. It is, Tolomeo writes, the form of the body and ‘the whole reason of life’.³⁸ Another way of expressing this is that since there is only one form, viz. one soul, for each body, the vegetative and sensitive souls do not have independent existence, but subsist as ‘potencies’ of the rational soul.³⁹ As Tolomeo puts it: ‘All perfection and all operation of the human being, whether corporal or animal take their origin from the rational soul, when the legislator said that “God formed”, or fashioned, “the human being and breathed in his face the breath of life and the human being was made a living soul.”⁴⁰

Since all of the appetites encompassed by the soul derive from the will of God, they all must lead one toward the good, but each type of soul seeks the good in its own characteristic manner. The vegetative does this through simple natural habit, which requires no cognition (the example Tolomeo gives is of the planets following their orbits); the sensitive does not enquire into why acts are good, but its actions presuppose a degree of sensual cognition, as when we are attracted to something sweet; finally, the intellective requires the mind to understand the reason of the good, as when we take a moral stand. This last kind of action is distinctively human and the application of the intellective appetite is what is denominated ‘will’. Although it is the most noble of human faculties, and acts separately from the body, it nevertheless depends on the vegetative and sensitive faculties, such as the senses, for proper cognition. As such, the will associated with it differs from angelic or divine will, and because of its entanglement with the senses it fails to be absolute and becomes subject to error.⁴¹ This relationship explains the transformation mentioned above of the relationship of the intellective to the sensitive virtues, and from the natural form of despotic control to the postlapsarian democratic or political coexistence of these virtues in a world in which reason is not always able to impose its judgements on the body.⁴²

None of these faculties are capable of functioning properly in the absence of human society. Although Tolomeo does not make this conclusion explicit in *De operibus sex dierum*, it is implicit in the fact that he chose to follow up his general

³⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.2, p. 148; XIII.3, p. 150.

³⁹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.8, p. 156.

⁴⁰ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, p. 188: ‘omnis perfectio, at omnis virtus, et omnis operatio hominis sive corporalis, sive animalis ab anima rationali originem trahunt, cum dicit legislator, quia “formavit”, sive finxit, “Deus hominem, et inspiravit in faciem ejus spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem.”’

⁴¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, pp. 191–93.

⁴² *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, pp. 188–89.

introduction and discussion of the soul with two chapters (or treatises, as he calls them) on the fundamental importance of living in a community. As a commentary on the parts of Genesis that refer to events before the first sin, when the entire human race comprised two people, his analysis there centred on the relationship of husband and wife, to which we will return in detail in the next chapter.

In *De regimine principum*, however, Tolomeo twice addresses the connection directly in proving the necessity of a city. All animals have many physical needs, but humans differ from all other animals in that they lack the specific resources and abilities to take care of themselves as individuals.⁴³ Both Tolomeo and Thomas Aquinas review all these needs in their respective parts of the treatise, but the latter does this only to highlight the nature of humans as social and political animals.⁴⁴ Tolomeo goes further, establishing an intimate connection between the parts of the soul and the foundation of a human community. In evaluating the way Plato divided the city into parts, Tolomeo points out that the farmers, in fulfilling human need for nourishment, satisfy the vegetative part of the spirit, and that artisans, whose duty is to provide ‘the need of the sensitive part of a person’, by providing things like clothing and ornaments, ‘delight or supplement the senses of sight, hearing, smell, or touch, whether they do this through buildings, clothes, shoes, or any other artificial thing’.⁴⁵

It is in regard to the rational spirit that human beings are unique, and so Tolomeo believed that the virtues connected with it are even more dependent upon human society. ‘The more one is human’, he writes, ‘the more one needs society.’ Analysing the parts of the rational spirit — intellect and will — he shows that these too require society. The intellective part has two kinds of actions associated with it, speculative and practical, both of which are inherently social. The moral virtues, classified under practical action, for example, cannot even be defined with respect to a single person.⁴⁶ The same is true of the speculative virtues, which require teaching, and also of other intellective actions such as the creation of order. Of the two educable senses, vision and hearing, which derive from the sensitive virtues but require the intellective for their full functioning, hearing presupposes a multitude, as even more do both speech and writing.⁴⁷

⁴³ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.

⁴⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.3–4; Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.1.3.

⁴⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.24.4.

⁴⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.3.1–4.

⁴⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.3.4–7.

Two of the virtues of the will are likewise directed to other people and thus need society: justice (doing double duty as both a practical and volitional virtue) and friendship. Justice, whether legal, distributive, or commutative, can only exist in cities, which in turn need justice to survive. Neither can friendship, which no one chooses to live without, exist without a community. Besides the positive advantages of friendship there is the possibly more important negative advantage, especially for the young, of discouraging them from sinning.⁴⁸ A third intellectual virtue, the consultative, functions by directing us to act correctly.⁴⁹

Now what is implicit in this whole discussion is that not only do many virtues require community, but they can only develop and grow in the context of human society. In the abstract discussion of these virtues Tolomeo leaves unanswered the question of whether the political participation of each individual is necessary for that individual's moral advancement, or whether simply living in a community provides sufficient opportunity. But as we will see, his treatment in *De regimine principum* of the close connection of republicanism and virtue shows that these virtues can only be fully achieved in a republic. And while this does not always demand the participation of every citizen, his praise for Rome shows that the republic is most effective and the virtue of the citizens is most widespread when this is the case.

Aristotle centred his defence of the a priori existence of society more on inherent human nature than on the things individuals lack on their own, but he did argue for the naturalness of the *polis* in part because of a mental lack in isolation. Holly Bleakley distinguishes two Aristotelian senses of 'natural': an innate impulse and something necessary for a final cause. These are equivalent except for humans, who must develop the virtues necessary for their destined end. This explains Aristotle's comment in the *Politics*: 'There is in everyone by nature an impulse toward this sort of community. And yet the one who first constituted [a city] is responsible for the greatest of goods.' The impulse toward association is not sufficient for a properly functioning *polis* unless people are led toward virtue by law and wise leaders. Thus, political association is natural in both senses.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.3.8–9.

⁴⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.24.3.

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1253a29–32: 'Natura quidem igitur impetus in omnibus ad talem communitatem: qui autem primus instituit, maximorum bonorum causa.' See Holly Bleakley, 'The Art of Ruling in Aquinas' *De regimine principum*', *History of Political Thought*, 20 (1999), 575–602 (pp. 586, 589–90). For the inability of reason to suffice for virtue outside of the political community, see also Struve, 'Bedeutung', p. 157.

This was true even in Eden, according to Tolomeo, since there always existed differentiation of abilities, and learning and the various intellectual virtues discussed above were always necessary to direct the masses to virtue, even when they had a natural instinct toward it before sin. The only question is if a community smaller than a city would satisfy these mental needs, which both Aristotle and Tolomeo denied. In these ways, Tolomeo developed a true and largely Aristotelian political naturalism, despite a continued emphasis on physical needs, which would be non-Aristotelian if it were the sole reason for the social impulse.

Tolomeo could also be seen as addressing the gap between the Ciceronian and Aristotelian approaches. In attempting to discredit the overwhelming importance of Aristotle for later medieval political thought, Cary Nederman points out that political naturalism was common before 1260.⁵¹ True enough, but this idea was usually put forward in the limited sense that government has an ordering function independent of religion, a point of view to which Augustine subscribed, and which was normally defended as an unfortunate necessity of degenerate human nature. Nederman argues that the twelfth-century John of Salisbury, perhaps uniquely before 1260, went on to develop its positive side: 'It is hard to see what or what kind of happiness could exist that is ignorant of community or outside of society, or how it could be formed.'⁵² John outlined a Ciceronian political naturalism based on an understanding of humanity as originally bestial, but with a submerged political nature which was urged to society by an enlightened orator. This might easily have attracted those believing in original sin: people no longer felt the natural call to virtue, but they could be led toward virtue. Nederman believes that Aristotle could not provide an explanation of good government satisfactory to medieval Christians, which is why writers like John of Paris and Marsilius of Padua continued to appeal to Cicero.⁵³

⁵¹ See, for example, Cary J. Nederman 'Aristotelianism and the Origins of "Political Science" in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52 (1991), 179–94 (pp. 180–81).

⁵² John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, ed. by Clement C. J. Webb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), I.1.826c, cited in Nederman, 'Nature, Sin, and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), 3–26 (p. 13): 'Cum vero beatitudo communione ignara, que aut qualis extra societatem sit, nec fingi quidem possit.' I previously thought that Nederman's translation exaggerated John's political naturalism: 'One cannot imagine how any kind of happiness could exist entirely apart from mutual association and divorced from human society.' But on reconsideration I have decided that he is correct.

⁵³ Nederman, 'Nature'.

John of Paris, writing around the same time as Tolomeo and also following Aristotle and concurring with Thomas Aquinas's treatment of society in the first part of *De regimine principum*, says that humans need society to fulfil their physical needs and to communicate through speech. Nevertheless, he switches to a Ciceronian approach in his description of early states. Before the early rulers Belus and Ninus took power well after original sin and thereby induced humans to live their lives together, John taught that humans lacked society and lived as beasts, without rule, against their nature.⁵⁴ In striking contrast, Tolomeo writes about the first rulers: 'Those who first exercised lordship in the world were iniquitous persons, such as Cain, Nimrod, Belus, Ninus, and his wife Semiramis.'⁵⁵ Both writers posit an early bestial period, in contrast to Aristotle's period of heroic kingship.⁵⁶ However, Tolomeo's modified Aristotelian naturalism required that the human primitive urge for society be fulfilled even if not in an ideal way, so he placed the bestial period under the earliest governments, the first of which Cain established. Tolomeo attributes the bestial nature of this period to the deformed nature of sinful humanity. As he makes clear, early lordship 'began through usurpation from a certain haughtiness of pride and lust of exercising lordship [...] because the reprobate alone assumed lordship in the beginning of the creation of the world'. Cain built his city so he could rule it, and he was followed after the flood by Ham and his 'accursed stock', many of whom practised magic, invented idols, and perished by a 'bad death'.⁵⁷ God permitted these tyrants to rule because of the sins of the people and used them as instruments of his justice, as he also used demons.⁵⁸ In contrast, John gives no clear reason, merely citing Augustine, Cicero, and Aristotle to the effect that such a period existed, but felt that it would take men with a greater than average degree of rationality and persuasive power to convince the masses to live a common life.

⁵⁴ John of Paris, *Tractatus de potestate regia et papali*, in *Johannes Quidort von Paris: 'Über königliche und päpstliche Gewalt'*, ed. by Fritz Bleienstein (Stuttgart: Klett, 1969), chap. 1.

⁵⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.7.1: 'primi dominantes in mundo fuerunt homines iniqui, ut historiae tradunt, sicut Cain, Nembroth, Belus, Ninus et Semiramis uxor eius.'

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, III.14.1285b.6–10.

⁵⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, pp. 36–38; chap. 25, p. 48: 'Ab initio seculi post peccatum non eo modo dominium est assumptum, sed ex quodam fastu superbie ac dominandi libidine per usurpationem incepit [...] quia soli reprobi in principio creationis mundi dominium assumpserunt.'

⁵⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.7.1–3.

Nevertheless John also was shaped by the Christian tradition of original sin, and faced with a belief in the degenerate state of humankind, both he and Tolomeo were challenged to explain how good government could ever arise. Tolomeo never completely succeeded in this,⁵⁹ but he gave a similar rationale to the one John used for government itself. Although Tolomeo's good rulers shared some elements with Ciceronian orators, he associated them with Aristotle's insistence on the necessity of skilled men for good government and, more significantly, placed their origins in a world already characterized by human government, not in an universally anarchic milieu demanding strong leadership merely to bring order. Neither Aristotle's nor Cicero's argument explains the existence of such virtuous men in a fundamentally corrupt and sinful population, so while each posited a period of bad government or anarchic living after the Fall neither was inherently more adaptable to Christian-Augustinian concepts of government in general.

Tolomeo never admitted that there was an inherent contradiction between Aristotle and Augustine. This is what led R. A. Markus to find no trace at all of any tensions between them in Tolomeo, and to refer to his position as 'the herald of a comfortable obliviousness to a profound cleavage in the tradition of Christian political thought'.⁶⁰ This is just the opposite of how I see it, since I consider this problem of the existence of the Aristotelian polity in the postlapsarian world to be one that Tolomeo returned to again and again in an attempt to find a satisfactory solution. As we will see, Tolomeo struggled but was finally unable to reconcile the need for repressing evil, which seems to require a despotic government, with his hatred of this form. He contrasted the majority of humanity, for whom oppressive government is necessary, with the minority of 'wise and virtuous people', such as the ancient Romans and his own northern Italians, for whom political government is desirable. He never resolved how purely civic virtue can overcome the taint of original sin, yet he continued to insist that the best form of government, for those for whom it is possible, is modelled by that of Adam in Paradise, but with participation extended to the many.

⁵⁹ See Blythe, *Ideal Government*, pp. 98–109, and my introduction to Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca), in *On the Government of Rulers (De regimine principum), with Portions Attributed to Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by James M. Blythe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp. 24–30.

⁶⁰ R. A. Markus, 'Two Conceptions of Political Authority: Augustine's *De civitate dei*, XIX, 14–15, and Some Thirteenth-Century Interpretations', *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 16 (1965), 68–100 (pp. 96–97).

WOMEN, GENDER, AND THE FAMILY

Medieval writing about women was frequently negative, and much of the positive material praised the virtues of religious women. Even the adoring view of women in Romance literature usually portrayed them as dependent upon chivalrous knights whose inspiration defined their chief function. But there was also a tradition of writing in praise of famous women, both sacred and secular, most famously Giovanni Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women* (1350s), which contains examples of both praiseworthy and flawed women, and Christine de Pizan's early fifteenth-century *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405).¹ Several works from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries present an ambivalent view of women. The women they praise come from classical, biblical, and medieval historical sources, and these women often excelled in activities usually closed to women. Marbod of Rennes (c.1035–1133) and Albertano da Brescia (c.1193–?1260), for example, praised the biblical Judith for beheading the Assyrian ruler Holofernes and then driving the enemy from Israelite cities. Along with biblical women and Christian martyrs, Marbod commended those pagan women who gave their lives to preserve their virtue or aid their husbands.² Boccaccio wrote of numerous rulers, including the Assyrian Semiramis; several Amazon queens; the Byzantine emperor Irene; Joanna, Queen

¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, trans. by Guido Guarino (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1963); Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea, 1982).

² Marbod of Rennes, *The Book with Ten Chapters*, trans. by C. W. Marx, chaps 4.6–8, in *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended*, ed. by Alcuin Blamires (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 231; Albertano da Brescia, *The Book of Consolation and Advice*, trans. by C. W. Marx, chap. 5.7, *ibid.*, p. 240.

of Sicily and Jerusalem; and the legendary, if nonexistent, Pope Joan, as well as the poet Sappho and the painter Thamyris.³ Christine de Pizan praised most of these and many others, such as the Merovingian queen Fredegund, and a host of women, both real and mythical, whose inventions helped the world.⁴

Many clerics wrote about women, but it was unusual for them to do this in any detail in the kind of works that Tolomeo primarily wrote: political thought and church and local history. It is more common in biblical exegesis, so it is not unusual to find that woman as one of the sexes God created holds a prominent place in Tolomeo's commentary on the six days of Creation, *De operibus sex dierum*. It is more surprising that women come up frequently in his other writings: as historical or semi-historical figures in *De regimine principum*, *Annales*, and *Historia ecclesiastica nova* and as city residents, family members, and potential and actual warriors in *De regimine principum*. At the end of *De regimine principum* Tolomeo says that he intends to write a whole treatise on the home and family, which would have treated women in detail, but he never did this. Part of his interest in women may have stemmed from his personal involvement with several important women, most notably Countess Capoana, widow of Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, ruler of Pisa, who took up residence in San Romano after her husband's downfall,⁵ and part may be the result of a developing scholarly discourse on the nature of women in his time.

This discourse is one of the main themes of the second volume of Prudence Allen's massive work *The Concept of Women*, a remarkable synthesis marred by the author's reliance on translations (even in some cases secondary accounts of translations of primary texts) and by the elementary error of using Tolomeo's portion of *De regimine principum* in her analysis of Thomas Aquinas.⁶ She does

³ Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, chap. 2 (Semiramis), chaps 11, 18, 30 (Amazon queens), chap. 100 (Irene), chap. 104 (Joanna), chap. 99 (Joan), chap. 45 (Sappho), chap. 54 (Thamyris). Irene purposely used the masculine title instead of empress, although Boccaccio does not mention this.

⁴ Christine de Pizan, *Book of the City of Ladies*, 1.13, 1.23 (Fredegund), 1.33–41 (inventors), 1.15 (Semiramis), 1.16–19 (Amazons), 1.30 (Sappho), 1.41 (Thamyris), 2.31 (Judith).

⁵ In the companion volume I give a full account of Capoana's life and her relationship with Tolomeo, including his work as executor of her will.

⁶ Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Women*, II: *The Early Humanist Reformation, 1250–1500* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 142–48. The problem seems to be that in attempting to assemble a massive synthesis, Allen relied too much on secondary sources, in this case on Kristin Mary Popik's *The Philosophy of Women of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Angelicum, 1979), which makes the same misattributions, though without the excuse of the author not being an Aquinas

not mention Tolomeo; indeed, she seems unaware of him or his contribution to *De regimine principum*. Her analysis of numerous writers led her to conclude that the 'concept of woman as described by male philosophers in academic discourse is caught in an ambivalent tension of philosophical foundations for gender neutrality and gender polarity and theological foundations for gender complementarity'.⁷ What she meant is that the various philosophical and religious sources accepted by the scholars she studied supported very different ways of conceptualizing the nature of women: as inherently the same as men (neutrality), as different and inferior (polarity), or as different but equal (complementarity). The Bible could be used to defend either neutrality or complementarity. Allen believed that Augustine, using Scripture, was the first to elaborate complementarity in a rudimentary form and that Hildegard von Bingen developed it fully for the first time in the twelfth century, with some contemporary monastic writers like Anselm and Herrad von Landsberg (or von Hohenberg) following suit. Allen argues that it was then buried for centuries through the rise of the universities, which accepted Aristotelian notions of gender polarity.⁸ I have argued that a similar conflict between Aristotelian and Augustinian views of politics led Tolomeo to an agonizing but finally unsuccessful attempt at synthesis. He oscillated between these poles as well with respect to women, but without the same equivocation or sense of conflict.

All Christian writers must contend with the fact that Genesis 1. 27 explicitly grants women an elevated origin the same as that of man: 'And God created humankind in his own image; he created it in the image of God; he created them masculine and feminine.'⁹ In Genesis 2 women were created after men and there is no mention of the image of God, which could give rise to doubt about women's equality. But whether commentators read Chapter 2, as most do, as a recapitulation and elaboration of the events in Chapter 1, or, following Augustine, who was alone among the Fathers in this, as in part a recapitulation of Chapter 1 and in part a perfection of the earlier creation of things in potency by producing them in actuality, there are no grounds in Chapter 2 for limiting God's image to the male. Even Paul, who was largely responsible for the strain of early Christianity

specialist (there is a summary of this book at <http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=2793> [accessed June 2008]).

⁷ Allen, *Concept of Women*, p. 22.

⁸ Allen, *Concept of Women*, pp. 8, 33–34.

⁹ 'Et creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam; ad imaginem Dei creavit illum; masculum et feminam creavit eos.'

derogatory to women, wrote in Galatians: ‘You are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. For whoever of you are baptized, you have put on Christ, and are neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, masculine or feminine, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’¹⁰ This passage does not refer to the image of God. A similar one in Colossians 3 does, but not to the sexes, perhaps because this chapter is one in which Paul most clearly demonstrated his hostility toward women. In quoting Colossians Tolomeo inserts the language from Galatians about masculine and feminine and states that Paul thereby showed that both were made in the image of God.¹¹

Although these texts suggest a gender neutral or complementary approach, Aristotelian influence tended to lead to gender polarity. Among the views on women that Tolomeo derived from Aristotle are those of their essential intellectual inferiority and their nature as incomplete, stunted, or infertile males.¹² These ideas mark the new element that entered the scholastic milieu in the generation before Tolomeo. Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* has no arguments for the natural inferiority of women, unlike the commentaries on it that appear in the early thirteenth century, such as those of Thomas Aquinas, or the other works of Thomas and his teacher, Albertus Magnus.¹³

The key Aristotelian text came from *On the Generation of Animals*, Book II, Chapter 3 (737a27) — ‘*femina est tanquam mas occasionatus*’ — in the translation of Michael Scot, which Thomas and Tolomeo used.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the mean

¹⁰ Galatians 3.26–28: ‘Omnes enim filii Dei estis per fidem in Christo Iesu. Quicumque enim in Christo baptizati estis Christum induistis non est Iudaeus neque Graecus non est servus neque liber non est masculus neque femina omnes enim vos unum estis in Christo Iesu.’

¹¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.5, p. 113. Colossians 3.10–11 reads as follows: ‘Et induentes novum eum qui renovatur in agnitionem secundum imaginem eius qui creavit eum ubi non est gentilis et Iudaeus circumcisio et praeputium barbarus et Scythia servus et liber sed omnia et in omnibus Christus’ (And putting on the new [human being], the one who is renewed in knowing according to the image of him who created that one, where there is no gentile and Jew, circumcised and prepuce, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free, but Christ all in all). Tolomeo quotes this closely, except for inserting the words ‘masculus vel foemina’ as the first items of the list.

¹² Robert Mayhew, *The Female in Aristotle’s Biology: Reason or Rationalization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), gives a spirited defence of Aristotle, arguing that he has long been misunderstood and that he was not blinded by gender presuppositions in his biological views. But it is inarguable that his views did work to support such views in many of the medieval writers that followed him.

¹³ Allen, *Concept of Women*, p. 135.

¹⁴ Both Tolomeo and Thomas change Aristotle’s wording. For example, *De regimine principum*, IV.5.8: ‘Tradit enim Philosophus De Gestis Animalium quod “mulier est masculus

ing of *occasionatus* is not straightforward, and in translations we find variously ‘incomplete’, ‘stunted’, ‘deformed’, ‘manqué’, ‘defective’, ‘maimed’, ‘mutilated’, ‘congenitally disabled’, and others. Aquinas defines it as follows: ‘That is called *occasionatus* which is not intended in itself, but arises from some corruption or defect.’ Though the words *femina* and *mas* can refer to any animal, its applicability to humans is clear, and Aquinas preceded his definition with a misquotation of Aristotle: ‘As the Philosopher says in *On Animals*, Book XVI, woman is an *occasionatus* man.’¹⁵

Michael Nolan quotes Thomas’s definition, but not the preceding misquotation, and argues against any strong idea of gender polarity in either Aristotle or Aquinas, claiming that *occasionatus* means merely accidental or unintended.¹⁶ Robert Mayhew argues that although Aristotle used the word in many other contexts to mean maimed or mutilated, he meant in this case only that females are not able to concoct perfect semen. But they are perfect in themselves, just as ‘a seal is perfect according to its nature and purpose’, but is mutilated when compared to normal quadrupeds.¹⁷ Both scholars present solid evidence for their views, but, whether or not they are correct, scholastic writers frequently coupled the Aristotelian phrase with denigration of women. Aquinas, for example, mentioned that Aristotle attributed the lack of reason among women to their imperfect

occasionatus”. Thomas Aquinas normally used *mas*, but on one occasion, his commentary on I Corinthians 11.1, he writes, ‘foemina est masculus occasionatus’. Probably both Thomas and Tolomeo quoted from memory. The William of Moerbeke translation is *mas orbatus*, perhaps ‘deprived’ or ‘lacking’. *On the Generation of Animals* was followed, and combined in Scot’s edition, with two other works of Aristotle on animals, and the whole given the title *On Animals*, so that what is Book II in the modern edition of *On the Generation of Animals* is Book XVI in the Scot edition, and it is to this that Aquinas and Tolomeo refer when they cite the *mas occasionatus* passage. See Aristotle, *De animalibus: Michael Scot’s Arabic-Latin Translation*, pt III: *Books XV–XIX: Generation of Animals*, ed. by Aafke M. I. van Oppenraaij (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis* (Parma: [n. pub.], 1856), II.20.2, a.1, obj. 1 (available electronically beginning at <<http://www.corpusthomicum.org/ctc0101.html>> [accessed June 2009]): ‘Sicut enim philosophus dicit in 16 de animalibus, mulier est vir occasionatus. Illud autem occasionatum dicitur quod non est per se intentum, sed ex aliqua corruptione vel defectu proveniens.’

¹⁶ See Allen, *Concept of Women*, pp. 136–38; Michael Nolan, ‘The Aristotelian Background to Aquinas’ Denial that “Woman is a Defective Male”’, *Thomist*, 64 (2000), 21–69 (p. 57). For the classical and medieval usage of *mas* (or *masculus*) *occasionatus*, see also Albert Mitterer, ‘*Mas occasionatus* oder zwei Methoden der Thomas-deutung’, *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 72 (1950), 80–103. Curiously, neither Nolan nor Allen cite this article.

¹⁷ Mayhew, *Female in Aristotle’s Biology*, pp. 54–55.

bodies, and concluded that this is why they are governed by emotion instead of reason and why there are so few wise and brave women.¹⁸ Scholastic thinkers were thus forced to reconcile this phrase, and others indicating female deficiency, with scriptural sources. Their task was made more complex by Aristotle's exposition of sex difference, and from the outset Aquinas and other scholastics, for no obvious reason, further complicated their analysis by dropping a word that Aristotle used, *tanquam* in Scot's version, *quemadmodum* in William of Moerbeke's: a female is *amas occasionatus* 'as it were'. This qualifier allowed a degree of flexibility in interpretation, which, according to Allan Gotthelf, was Aristotle's intent.¹⁹

In Aristotle, the nature of sex difference arises in his discussion of reproduction and hinges on the Aristotelian qualities of all objects — moist and dry, cold and warm. These are the components of the four elements and humours; their proportion determines physical properties and their transformation explains physical change. Every organism has its 'complexion', the precise mixture of qualities that characterizes it. Although the qualities can be unbalanced, there is a natural complexion for each species, and within each species for each sex and age. Women are cold and moist, which conditions all their roles and characteristics, reproduction in particular: 'A woman', Aristotle writes, 'is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of inability of a sort, namely that she lacks the power to concoct semen [...] because of the coldness of her nature.'²⁰ Boys also share this excess of moisture, but in them the condition is temporary. Nature works to control any tendency to develop excesses of qualities and bring them closer to the optimal balance. Women, for example, purge moisture through menstruation, but for this reason menstrual blood is especially dangerous, since

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri ethicorum* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1969), VII.5.9 (available electronically beginning at <<http://www.corpusthomicum.org/ctc0101.html>. [accessed June 2009]): 'Et ponit exemplum de mulieribus in quibus, ut in pluribus, modicum viget ratio propter imperfectionem corporalis naturae. Et ideo, ut in pluribus, non ducunt affectus suos secundum rationem, sed magis ab affectibus suis ducuntur. Propter quod raro inveniuntur mulieres sapientes et fortes.'

¹⁹ Allan Gotthelf, 'Notes toward a Study of Substance and Essence in Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* ii–iv', in *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things: Philosophical and Historical Studies Presented to David M. Balme on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Allan Gotthelf (Pittsburgh: Mathesis, 1985), p. 40 (also cited in Mayhew, *Female in Aristotle's Biology*, p. 55). He argues that Aristotle used the words translated 'deformed as it were' to indicate a situation in which an organism performs its function well, but lacks something that the wider class of which the organism is a part has.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, I.20.728a.17–21.

it concentrates their coldness. A man who had sex with a menstruating woman could become sterile or develop leprosy or cankers; a resulting child would be weak or a monster. Tolomeo attributed to Aristotle the view that the glance of a menstruating woman stains a mirror.²¹

Usually medieval writers mentioned feminine qualities in negative contexts like these, but Tolomeo also sometimes treated them more positively in the sense that he discussed ways women could help restore their own balance. Tolomeo relied on his experience to demonstrate that exercise strengthens women and connected his observation with the ability of any motion to purge excess moisture. He pointed to female peasants and servants, who are stronger and healthier than other women, who presumably got little exercise.²²

In supporting exercise for women, Tolomeo went against much medieval medical wisdom. Partially this wisdom stemmed from the belief that women's cold complexion and frailty demanded that they not exert themselves. Hildegard von Bingen agreed but saw little benefit for men either:

A man who is of sound body is not much harmed if he walks or stays standing for a long time [...]. A man who is weak should sit, since if he were to go or stand, he would be harmed. Woman, however, since she is more fragile than man [...] should walk and stand in moderation, but should sit more than she runs around, lest she be harmed.

A few others, like Bernardus de Gordonio, felt that women's lack of exercise contributed to their weaker constitutions, which is why he said that sexual abstinence is more harmful for women than men.²³

²¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.11, pp. 162–63; Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 268. Tolomeo adds that Ambrose said that old women fascinate boys with their stare. In a treatise falsely ascribed to Albertus Magnus we read: 'women are so full of venom in the time of their menstruation that they poison animals by their glance; they infect children in their cradle; they spot the cleanest mirror; and whenever men have sexual intercourse with them they are made leprous and sometimes cancerous'; see (Pseudo-) Albertus Magnus, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' 'De secretis mulierum' with Commentaries*, ed. and trans. by Helen Rodnite Lemay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), preface, p. 60. The material cited is not from pseudo-Albertus himself, but from a medieval 'Commentator A', whose commentary is included in many manuscripts and printed editions.

²² *De regimine principum*, IV.5.3. The reluctant twelfth-century abbess Heloise, Letter 5 to Abelard in Abelard and Heloise, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, trans. by Betty Radice, rev. edn (New York: Penguin, 2004), p. 166, applies the theory of female moistness to argue that it prevented nuns from easily becoming drunk, so they should be able to drink more than male monks.

²³ Cadden, pp. 172–73, citing Hildegard von Bingen, *Causae et curae*, ed. by Paul Kaiser, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum teubneriana* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903), 2.86–87,

Tolomeo's defence of exercise is one of several arguments he gives for women soldiers, since it incidentally increases their ability to fight. Female birds and beasts, he asserts, are so fierce largely because they were so active.²⁴ 'If, therefore, feminine virtue is greatly strengthened in gymnasia and in warlike activities', he concludes, 'it would seem to be appropriate for the practice of war to pertain to them.'²⁵ The 'seem' is significant; after considering all the pros and cons, he does reject female soldiers, but not the value of exercise.

Tolomeo's point about virtue here makes little sense today, since our concept of it is narrower than the scholastic one and normally refers only to moral qualities. For Aristotle, *ἀρετή* had a different range of meanings; he characterizes virtue as a habit which 'brings into good condition the thing of which it is an excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well'. In the case of humans it is 'that which makes humans good and makes them do their own work well'.²⁶ It refers, then, to any action in accordance with true ends or functions, primarily of the soul, but also of the body. This includes physical well-being. Tolomeo's conclusion follows from Aristotle's assumption that the exercise of a virtue is good. But there are ways to get exercise other than fighting, he says, which would interfere with women's roles.

With regard to conception, Aristotle believed that the mother provides the matter and the father the soul, and Tolomeo concurred: 'In the act of generation two seeds do not come together, but one alone, from the man.'²⁷ A popular medi-

and Bernardus de Gordonio, *Practica dicta lilium* (Venice: Bonetus Locatellus, 1498), pt VII, chap. 1, fols 87^{vb}–88^{ra}. Cadden makes the point that the question of whether behaviour causes women's constitution or the reverse did not occur to medieval authors because of the integration of medical and gender ideas and 'of the cultural assumption that the integration was appropriate, requiring no explanation or justification'.

²⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.3: 'Amplius autem, proportio qualitatum primarum ad hoc idem inducit, ut calidi et humidi, frigidi et sicci, ex quibus ad medium deductis fortificatur mixtum in sua virtute [...]. Sic etiam videmus in avibus rapacibus quod foeminae ratione sui motus ut sunt fortioris naturae et majoris corpulentiae. Cum igitur in mulieribus abundet humidum, sicut in pueris, per motum consumatur et venit ad temperamentum, ex quo et vires recipit.'

²⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.2: 'Amplius autem, corporale exercitium confert foeminis quantum ad virtutem corporis et fortitudinem, sicut in ancillis familiarum et mulieribus rusticanis est manifestum, quia fortiores sunt et saniores. Virtutis autem proprium est quod bonum faciat habentem et opus eius bonum reddat. Si ergo in gymnasiis ac rebus bellicis magis confortatur foeminea virtus, congrue opera bellica videntur eisdem competere.'

²⁶ Aristotle, *Ethics*, II.6.1106a.15–24.

²⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.5. Mayhew, *Female in Aristotle's Biology*, pp. 33–38, points out that Aristotle used 'seed' in several ways, and only in one meaning, that of the fully formed seed

eval commentary, *On the Secrets of Women*, incorrectly ascribed to Albertus Magnus, added that this matter will produce a girl only if deficiencies in heat and matter thwart nature — which is why some say that a woman is an inhuman monster by nature.²⁸ As mentioned, Aristotle felt that a woman is a woman precisely because of a flaw — the inability to produce the semen necessary to determine the form of a fetus. Just as a deformed parent may give birth to a normal or abnormal child, a female may bear a male or a female, which Aristotle called a natural deformity.²⁹

Thomas Aquinas wondered whether his belief that nothing defective should have been created in the beginning implied that God erred in creating woman. He was able satisfactorily to answer this question in the negative because of the meaning of intention in Aristotle, which can apply to inanimate and unconscious nature as well as to humans and God, and by which something defective in its mode of creation can result from the positive intention of an agent, just as vintners intentionally produce wine through the corruption of grapes. Such natural corruption is part of nature's intention. Aquinas reasoned that a woman is defective with respect to the particular nature of the male's semen, but not with regard to universal nature, since she was ordained to bear children.³⁰ He thereby absolved God from creating something defective, since in the context of the nature of the species woman is intended by God. Moreover, by an argument similar to the one Mayhew and Gotthelf ascribed to Aristotle, Thomas asserted that universal nature may intend a kind of perfection suitable for what is a defect from the point of view of the particular nature. Thus, the woman is capable of a perfection of her own kind, though it is not the same as that of the male.³¹ The diversity of sexes contributes to the perfection of the human species as a whole.³²

capable of initiating generation, did he deny it to women. But, once again, this does not affect the medieval interpretations.

²⁸ Pseudo-Albertus, *Women's Secrets*, p. 106. The material cited is from 'Commentator B'.

²⁹ Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, II.4.738b, I.19.727b, II.3.737a, IV.6.775a.

³⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.2 ad 1. See Nolan, 'Aristotelian Background', p. 58, for the example and basic argument.

³¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, III.94.11: 'Patet ergo quod de intentione agentis particularis est quod effectus suus fiat perfectus quantumcumque potest in genere suo; de intentione autem naturae universalis est quod hic effectus fiat perfectus tali perfectione, puta perfectione masculi, ille autem perfectione feminae.'

³² Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, IV.44.1, a.3c: 'debetur diversis diversi sexus; et haec etiam diversitas competit perfectioni speciei'.

Although Thomas did not address it directly, his conclusion also solved the potential objection that since Eve was not born through the action of semen, her imperfect nature reflected God's failure. But there was no defect in Eve's creation, only in the natural process that leads to every other individual woman except for Mary: The active power in the man's semen wants to 'produce something like itself, perfect in its masculinity', but fails to do this because of the debility of the active power, the unsuitability of the matter provided by the mother, or some external influence, like a damp wind.³³ 'This means', as Allen points out in a summary of Nolan's argument, 'the natural principle for gender polarity is always qualified by this distinction. Even though Aristotle's qualification, "as it were," is dropped, a new qualification is added, namely that the universal nature of God intends the female as much as the male.'³⁴

Although Aristotle and Aquinas both thought that women are natural, they frequently said derogatory things about them. There are also some passages in Aquinas which arguably present women as defective as women, not just in the process of their generation. Right before the passage from *Summa contra gentiles* cited above Thomas writes: 'The particular agent tends to the good of the part absolutely [...] but the universal to the good of the whole. Whence something is defective according to the intention of the particular agent which is according to the intent of the universal agent.' And, a little later, he adds that the female 'is according to the intention of universal nature, i.e., of the virtue of the universal nature for the generation of inferior beings, that the female be generated [...]. And in the same way corruption, or diminution, and every defect, is according to the intention of universal nature, but not of particular nature'. Subtleties of translation — should we read 'something is defective' or 'something defective'? does 'inferior' mean worse or sublunary? — and interpretation allowed Nolan to cite this passage to show that the defect is only in the process and Allen to cite it to show that Aquinas clearly calls the female and not the process defective.³⁵

³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.1 ad 1: 'Virtus activa quae est in semine maris intendit producere sibi simile perfectum secundum masculinum sexum.'

³⁴ Allen, *Concept of Women*, p. 138.

³⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, III.94.11: 'Particulare agens tendit ad bonum partis absolute, et facit eam quanto meliorem potest; universale autem agens tendit ad bonum totius. Unde aliquis defectus est praeter intentionem particularis agentis, qui est secundum intentionem agentis universalis [...]. Sicut patet quod generatio feminae est praeter intentionem naturae particularis, idest, huius virtutis quae est in hoc semine, quae ad hoc tendit quod perficiat conceptum quanto magis potest: est autem de intentione naturae universalis, idest, virtutis univer-

Whatever the precise meaning, the words of Aristotle and Aquinas gave plenty of room for future writers to read them as they please.

One way in which almost all agreed that women are inferior to men is their physical abilities. Tolomeo argues that nature designed weak women to ensure that they stick to their destined functions:

Nature disposed women so as to remove the occasion of fighting from them, because, as Aristotle says [...] women have more feeble bodies than men and have less heat, and the only members they have that are thicker than men's are those ordained to the act of generation and bearing, such as the belly, buttocks, and breasts for nourishment. All their other members are more slender and more feeble than men's, and they are less vigorous in those members in which fortitude consists, such as the feet and legs, hands and upper arms, and all other individual members which are the foundation of fortitude, as I said above.³⁶

Amazons, previously invoked to show that women could fight, now feature as a cautionary tale to show how far women must go to overcome their natural limitations. One reason, he says, for keeping women out of the military

derives from the ineptitude of women's members for fighting. Aristotle distinguishes, in *On the Generation of Animals*, between males and females in this way since a male has stronger members, arms, hands, nerves, and veins (which results in the production of a rougher voice), buttocks, belly, and other more subtle attributes. Women are just the reverse, so they are more suited for the act of generation, and their breasts for nourishing their offspring — but all of these things impede fighting. It is written that, for this reason,

salis agentis ad generationem inferiorum, quod femina generetur [...]. Et eodem modo corruptio, et diminutio, et omnis defectus est de intentione diminutio et omnis defectus, est de intentione naturae universalis, non autem naturae particularis.' See Nolan, 'Aristotelian Background', p. 64, and Allen, *Concept of Women*, pp. 139–40.

³⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.6: 'Sed contra hanc politiam rationes sunt fortes, quibus difficile est respondere. Una quidem est Aristotelis in 2 *Politicorum*, quia non est eadem ratio de animalibus et hominibus, eo quod animalia non subjiciuntur dominio oeconomico'; 4.6.2: 'homo naturaliter est civilis et oeconomicus, et in gubernatione suae familiae proprius actus est mulieris, sive in nutritione filiorum sive in honestate servanda in domo sive in provisione victualium, quae omnia fieri non possent si rebus bellicis intenderent; et propter haec natura ipsam sic disposuit, ut ab ipsa pugnandi occasio tolleretur, quia ut Philosophus [...] mulieres debiliora habent corpora quam viri et sunt minores caloris, et sola illa membra grossiora in eis videmus quae ad actum ordinantur generationis et gestum ut venter et nates, ac ad nutrimentum mammillae. Omnia autem alia habent subtiliora et debiliora quam viri et minus nervosa in quibus fortitudo consistit, ut sunt pedes et crura, manus et lacerti, et sic de singulis membris ubi fortitudo fundatur, ut dictum est supra.' 'Above' refers to IV.5.7; the Aristotle reference is *On the Generation of Animals*, I.19.727a.18–20.

Amazon girls cut off their right breasts and press down their left, so as not to be impeded in shooting arrows.³⁷

Tolomeo also believed that women's minds are inferior, again citing the dictum that a woman is a defective man and thus that 'just as women are deficient in their physical constitution, so also are they deficient in reason'.³⁸ This suggests that he understood the scholarly women that he reported as rare prodigies, not examples of what women could be with proper education. He argues, as had Giles of Rome, that women, lacking heat, are timid and fearful, which accords with Albertus Magnus's comment that fighting women would go against 'the natural timidity of the feminine sex'.³⁹ This does not contradict what Tolomeo says about women becoming stronger through exercise, since, he maintained, strength is not everything, as demonstrates by the victory of short Romans over tall Germans: 'Fortitude alone does not alone suffice for victory in a fight but rather astuteness in making war, which women lack.'⁴⁰ This results from their natural deformity: 'Since their reason is defective, women lack astuteness for war, a quality by which fighters often become victors.'⁴¹

³⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.7: 'Secunda ratio sumitur ex ipsa membrorum muliebrium ineptitudine ad pugnandum. Sic enim Philosophus distinguit *De Gestis Animalium* inter masculum et foeminam, quia masculus habet superiora membra grossiora, brachia, manus, nervos et venas, ex quibus vox grossiora generatur, nates vero et ventrem et alia circumstantia subtiliora, mulieres autem e converso et hoc ut in actu generationis sint aptiores, amplius autem et mammillas ad nutriendam prolem, quae omnia sunt impeditiva pugnae. Unde et de Amizonibus scribitur, quod puellis mammillas amputabant dextras, sinistris autem comprimebant, ne impederentur a sagittando.' Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, I.19.727a.18–20, comments on the greater strength of men, but he does not mention fighting or specific body parts.

³⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.8: 'Tradit enim Philosophus *De Gestis Animalium* quod "mulier est masculus occasionatus": unde sicut deficit in complexione, ita et in ratione.'

³⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.8: 'Sicut deficit in complexionis, ita et in ratione. Et inde est quod propter defectum caloris et complexionis sunt pavide et mortis timidae, quod in bellis maxime fugiendum est.' See Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in octo libros politicorum Aristotelis*, in *Opera Omnia*, 21 vols (London: [n. pub.], 1651), IV, 78–79 (II.3): 'bellare cum viris [...] hoc sit contra timiditatem sexus foeminei'.

⁴⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.6.3: 'Quod vero dicitur quod fortitudo augetur in eis per exercitium, hoc est verum; ergo pugnare expedit eis. Ad hoc responderi potest quod sola fortitudo non sufficit ad vincendum in pugna, ut probat Vegetius in principio *De Arte Militari*, sed astutia bellandi qua mulieres carent: "Rudis enim et indocta multitudo exposita est semper ad necem." Sed autem brevitatis corporum Romanorum adversus Germanorum proceritatem praevaluit, ut ibidem dicitur, et propterea mulieres non debent actibus exponi ex quibus a virtutibus excludantur.'

⁴¹ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.8: 'Propter vero defectum rationis caret astutiis bellicis, quibus pugnantes ut plurimum sunt victores.'

Even Amazons were mentally deficient: although Alexander could not beat them in battle, he was able to win through astuteness and flattery.⁴² This suggests that women are inconstant and easily swayed by sweet-talking men, yet it was also common for medieval (and modern) misogynists, though not for Tolomeo, to attribute the opposite characteristics to them — that they are crafty and self-willed, able to bend any man to their will. These two views are not as contradictory as might appear, since they are united in their assumption that women are incomplete in another way — their moral sense is also stunted. This renders them amoral and unprincipled, as well as unable to evaluate correctly the moral or rational content of an argument. The same woman can be deadly at one time and an easy prey at another.

The examples that I have cited so far come from Tolomeo's response to specific questions about the place of women raised in Aristotle's *Politics*. The most obvious place to look for his ideas on the nature of women in general is his discussion of their creation in *De operibus sex dierum*. There Tolomeo worked with most of the ideas coming down to him from biblical, patristic, Aristotelian, and scholastic sources and portrayed woman as formed in God's image and a necessary creation. In *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, Tolomeo uses some of his strongest language to rail against the Parisian scholar and pantheist Almaric (Amaury) de Bene, who around 1200 proposed a more radical understanding of the sexes, according to which God originally intended to create a single, perfect sex. Innocent III condemned him, and Tolomeo commented on the controversy:

Among other blasphemies that he [Almaric] said, he asserted that [...] if human beings had not sinned, they would not have been divided into two sexes, nor have procreated, but would have multiplied like the angels, and that in the resurrection there would not be two sexes, and many other similar abominable things. Whence after the condemnation of his writings, King Philip of France, following the mandate of Innocent, as Vincent wrote, caused all his accomplices found in Paris who were captured and convicted of his false and perverse doctrines to be burned outside the gate of the city. And because the said impious Almaric was already dead, his body was exhumed and burned and his ashes dispersed in a dung-pit.⁴³

⁴² *De regimine principum*, IV.5.8.

⁴³ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXI.6, col. 1122: 'Qui inter alias blasphemias, quas dixit, asseruit quod [...] si homo non peccasset, in duplicem sexum partitus non fuisset, nec generasset, sed sicut angeli multiplicari fuissent; et quod in resurrectione non erit duplex sexus; et etiam multa similia abominabilia. Unde post suae scripturae damnationem rex Francorum Philippus ex mandato Innocenti, ut scribit, Vincentius, omnes complices sui dogmatis falsi et perversi, qui Parisiis sunt inventi, captos atque convictos extra portam civitatis fecit comburi. Ex quia dictus impius

Tolomeo's vehemence doubtless derived in part from his revulsion at Almaric's teaching that people are part of God, but the doctrines he actually mentions are ones that violate what Tolomeo understood as the position of men and women in the natural and divine order.

Tolomeo's viewpoint was partially dependent upon Augustine, who argued that humans were made in the image of God only as regards their spiritual natures, in which there was no distinction between male and female.⁴⁴ Tolomeo explains that the Creation of Genesis 1. 27 'must be understood as referring to the souls of Adam and Eve, according to which they are called to the image of God [...] and this pertains to the works of the six days. But the formation of their bodies is not computed among the works of the six days, unless seminally or virtually, but actually to those works which God even now performs.'⁴⁵

Augustine was largely alone in this interpretation, as Tolomeo acknowledged. The words 'seminally or virtually' are crucial to Augustine's understanding, since he insisted that it was not only the soul that was created on the first day. Tolomeo added that both the Bible and church teach this.⁴⁶ But unlike Augustine, and because of his Aristotelian grounding, Tolomeo felt that women could not share equally in the image of God. Thus, he interprets Paul's statement in I Corinthians 11. 7, 'man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man', in a way different from Augustine, who believed that the sexes differed only in their bodies but not in their rational minds, and that this is what Paul meant to say.⁴⁷ In contrast, Tolomeo writes:

We must also consider the subject of that image, since it extends to man and woman, although more perfectly in man, because he is of a more understanding nature, since woman is a defective male, and of defective nature, as Aristotle reports in *De naturalibus*, Book XVI. Nor is what Paul says in I Corinthians 11 an objection: 'man is the image and

Almaricus iam mortuus erat, extumulatum est corpus eius, et concrematum, atque cineres eius in sterquilinio sunt dispersi.'

⁴⁴ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, III.22. For a translation, see Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. by John H. Taylor, Ancient Christian Writers, 41–42, 2 vols (New York: Newman, 1981).

⁴⁵ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.7, p. 208: "ad imaginem suam creavit illum, masculum, et feminam creavit eos," intellegenda sunt quantum as animas Adae, et Evae, secundum quas ad imaginem Dei dicuntur, ut supra est ostensum in Tract. IX, et hoc pertinet ad opera vi dierum. Sed formatio corporis utriusque inter opera vi dierum non computantur, nisi seminaliter, vel virtualiter, actualiter vero ad illa opera, quibus Deus etiam nunc operatur.'

⁴⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.2, p. 223; Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, III.22.

⁴⁷ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, III.22.

glory of God, but woman is the glory of man', for Augustine treats this in *De Trinitate*, Book XII, where he persists in his opinion that that image applies to both sexes, which the letter of Genesis confirms, when it says, 'he created humanity in the image of God; he created them masculine and feminine'. But to this extent it is more appropriate for the man, as I already mentioned above, because the reason of the image is more vigorous in the man, and on that account the man is the beginning and end of the woman, just as God is of every creature. Whence after Paul said, 'man is the image and glory of God, etc.', he immediately showed the cause of this when he added, 'for the man is not on account of the woman, but the woman on account of the man', as if the glory of the man should depend on this, since she should be guided and directed by him.⁴⁸

First, note that Tolomeo says quite clearly what had been somewhat ambiguous in Aristotle and Aquinas: woman is defective in herself. Furthermore, though Tolomeo depended on Aquinas and Augustine, he was really saying something quite different with respect to the meaning of the image of God. For Thomas, the image of God exists equally in both sexes in a primary sense, but a man also possessed God's image in a secondary sense unique to males: just as God is the beginning and end of all creatures, so too is the man with regard to a woman.⁴⁹ Tolomeo uses some of these words but does not repeat the analogy, and instead points to the allegedly greater purity of the image in the man. When he refers to his previous words, he could only mean what he had just said about the greater understanding the male has because of the female's deficient nature, and thus, opposing both Augustine and Aquinas, Tolomeo believed that woman is incomplete, even in those aspects of her being that were created in the image of God. Also in contrast to them, Tolomeo believed that man's glory, and the meaning of man being a woman's beginning and end, is that he has authority over her.

⁴⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, IX.5, pp. 111–12: 'hic attendimus de ista imagine est subjectum eius, quia se extendit ad virum, et mulierem, quamvis sit in viro perfectior, eo quod magis intellectualis naturae, cum sit mulier masculus occasionatus, et naturae defectivus, ut Philosophus in XVI de naturalibus tradit. Nec est instantia Divi Apostoli Cor. 1. 11, ubi dicitur quod "vir est imago, et gloria Dei, mulier autem gloria est viri": haec enim pertractat Divus Augustinus in XII de Trinitate, et in hoc eius persistit sententia quod ista imago utrumque sexum attingit, quod etiam littera Genesis hoc confirmat cum dicitur: "ad imaginem Dei fecit illum, masculus et foeminam creavit eos." Sed pro tanto magis viro appropriatur, ut iam tactum est supra, quia ratio imaginis vigorosior est in viro, et propterea vir est principium mulieris, et finis, sicut Deus totius creaturae. Unde cum Divus dixisset Apostolus, "vire est imago, et gloria Dei," etc., ostendit statim causam huius cum subdit, "non enim vir propter mulierem, sed mulier propter virum," quasi in hoc dependeret gloria viri, quoniam ab ipso gubernanda, et dirigenda.' Tolomeo is citing Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.93.4 ad 1. Aquinas also mentions the *mas occasionatus* with respect to the creation of women at I.92.1, obj. 1.

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.93.4 ad 1.

Despite these beliefs, Tolomeo also acknowledged a sense in which woman surpasses man, and this is symbolized by the creation of woman within Paradise, whereas Adam was created outside, perhaps 'to insinuate the greater honourableness sought in her [...] and perhaps this is why a greater reverence is shown to them than to men'.⁵⁰ As to why Eve was created from Adam, Tolomeo merely paraphrases Aquinas: so that Adam would be the beginning of the whole species (as God of the universe), so that a man would love his wife more as part of his own substance, to symbolize that man and woman each have domestic duties under the man's direction, and so that woman emerging from man would be a type for the church arising from Christ.⁵¹ With respect to the point about duties, both authors cite Aristotle to say that man and woman come together not only, as in animals, for reproduction, but also for domestic life, in which nature distinguishes some activities according to gender, which is not the case with animals, and in which the man is head of the women. Although these points were almost direct quotations from Aquinas, Tolomeo introduced some other elements in the same paragraph that took him in another direction, as did his commentary on the reason Eve came from a rib and not another part (which I will discuss later). Thomas wrote simply that it was to show that the woman had no authority over the man, so she did not come from his head, nor was she his slave, and so did not come from his foot.⁵² Now, clearly Tolomeo agreed, but wanted to go farther and use the Creation story as a basis for understanding the social nature of domestic life, which he considered its chief meaning and purpose.

This is how Tolomeo interpreted Genesis 2. 18, 'and God said, "it is not good for a human being to be alone; let us make help for him similar to him".' Tolomeo stresses two points, the first and most important one that 'society is innate to humans according to nature: for Aristotle proves in *Politics*, Book I, that a human is naturally a social animal'. The association of man and woman is prior both in

⁵⁰ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.1, p. 197: 'Mulier autem ibidem formata est, non propter se, sed propter dignitatem sui principium, ex quo formabatur corpus eius, et ad insinuandam maiorem eius honestatem, quae in ipsa requiritur, ut tradit praeclarus doctor Hieronymus, in epistola ad Cellantiam Virginem: et inde est forte quod eisdem maior exhibetur reverentia super viros, et hoc manifeste videmus in singulis.' This is not an original idea, e.g., a twelfth-century text says: 'Woman is to be preferred to man, to wit in material: Adam was made from clay and Eve from the side of man; in place: Adam was made outside paradise and Eve within; in conception: a woman conceived God which man did not do; in apparition: Christ appeared to a woman after the Resurrection'; see Eileen Power, *Medieval Women* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 14.

⁵¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.4, pp. 226–27; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.2.

⁵² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.3.

time and in importance to all other societies. Tolomeo gives three reasons why nature requires this society: the need for mutual assistance, the need for 'mutual consolation and celebration', and the need for procreation.⁵³ Tolomeo's stress on the non-sexual aspects of the relationship was in contrast to that of both Augustine and Aquinas, who had cited Augustine to defend the notion that the only area in which a woman could help a man better than another man is in procreation.⁵⁴ For Tolomeo, procreation is important, and part of every creature's desire to fulfil its nature, but it is no more essential than social needs, and in many ways it is less so.

Tolomeo's second point regarding the centrality of domestic life is that what God said was designed not only for the State of Innocence, but also for the future, when society would be even more important. Human needs are not identical before and after sin, but the three needs mentioned above are basic to humans in any situation, and from the beginning they included feeding and educating children. After sin, all these needs continue, but they are intensified by the hardships and pains of the world and the fact that children are no longer naturally obedient. Other needs arise from the general tendency toward evil, which calls forth the repressive apparatus of the state, and thus other people beyond the family. Family problems, though, are best solved by the society of husband and wife, and, above all, before or after sin, humans need companionship and friendship. Tolomeo marshalled several classical texts on friendship and applied them unusually to the relationship of men and women. For example, he quotes a line that Cicero ascribed to Archytas of Tarentum: 'If someone ascended into heaven and beheld the nature of the world and stars, it would not be pleasant for them to admire that beauty if there were no friend or companion there.'⁵⁵ And he somewhat miscontextualizes Seneca, who, according to Tolomeo, 'in regard to avoiding solitude and loving society, says [...] "there is no one who ought to relinquish it [society]"'. Otherwise, many evils and dangers will ensue, such as following base desires and bad self-counsel.⁵⁶

⁵³ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.1, p. 220: 'innata est hominibus societas secundum naturam: probat enim Philosophus in primo Politicorum quod homo naturaliter est animal sociale'.

⁵⁴ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IX.5; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.1.

⁵⁵ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.3, p. 224; Cicero, *On Friendship*, p. 23: 'Si quis in coelum ascendisset, naturamque mundi, et syderium aspexisset pulchritudinem, insuavem ille sine amico, vel socio admirationem fore.' Tolomeo also cites this text in *De regimine principum*, IV.3.11, in reference to the need for the city.

⁵⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.2, p. 222, citing Seneca, *Ad Lucillum*, I.10. Seneca wrote: 'Nemo est ex imprudentibus qui relinqui sibi debeat; tunc mala consilia agitant, tunc aut aliis aut ipsis

It is remarkable enough that before 1300 we find such a Roman classical defence of the active social life, especially from a member of a religious order, still more that to this end he distorted a source that could have been used to defend the contemplative life of those living prudently under a rule. But it is most remarkable that Tolomeo believed that this need for friendship is best served by a spouse, in contrast to much of classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature, which denigrated female friendship and idealized the society of men. Tolomeo cites such a text from Augustine on male friendship only to see it as less satisfying than marriage: 'And although a man with a man, namely of a brother with brother, or of a father with a child, has pleasantness in mutual service, or among friends, as Augustine says in *On Genesis*, Book VIII, nevertheless the pleasantness of a good conjugal relationship is greater than this.'⁵⁷

Elsewhere, Tolomeo cites Genesis 2. 24 — 'a person will leave father and mother, and adhere to a spouse; and they will be two in one flesh' — to amplify this sentiment. In this, he writes, 'it is signified that conjugal love surpasses all loves [*delectiones*], which Aristotle seems to determine in *Ethics*, Book VIII'.⁵⁸ Sexual gratification is only one of the many reasons that this love rises above all others. In defending his position, Tolomeo once again transforms and undermines Augustine's intended meaning in an attempt to reconcile it with Aristotle. Augustine wrote, and Tolomeo cites this directly, that there is a threefold good to marriage: fidelity, offspring, and the sacrament of marriage. But Augustine prefaces this statement with his view that procreation is the only way in which the woman can be a helper to the man, and he interprets his triple good only in terms of procreation and sexual fidelity: through them the natural tendency of all species becomes honourable for humans and lust is properly restricted.⁵⁹

futura pericula struunt, tunc cupiditates improbas ordinant; tunc quidquid aut metu aut pudore celabat animus exponit, tunc audaciam acuit, libidinem irritat, iracundiam instigat.' But Tolomeo wrote: 'Unam tamen concludendum, quod de vitanda solitudine, et societate diligenda Seneca dicit in epistolam ad Lucillum, "nemo est," inquit, "qui sibi relinqui debeat"', and then followed Seneca fairly closely.

⁵⁷ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.1, p. 220: 'Et quamvis vir cum viro, puta fratris cum fratre, vel patris cum filio suavitatem habet in obsequio mutuo, vel inter amicos, ut dicit Augustinus 8 Super Genesis, suavitas tamen boni coniugalis excedit.' I cannot find this statement in *De Genesi ad litteram*, Book VIII, but at IX.5, Augustine said that two men could enjoy common living with respect to conversation and companionship better than a man and a woman.

⁵⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, p. 233: 'significatur amor coniugalis ultra omnes dilectiones excellere, quod etiam Philosophus videtur velle in viii Ethicorum'; in reference to Genesis 2.24: 'quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum et matrem et adhaerebit uxori suae et erunt duo in carne una'.

⁵⁹ Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, IX.7; *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, p. 232.

Tolomeo expands the application of the three goods of marriage. Fidelity is sexual, but more importantly it extends to friendship, which includes sharing of goods. Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of friendship depending on their basis in pleasure, utility, or virtue. Only the last is true friendship, in which the friends have more concern for the other's good than their own, though it encompasses the other kinds in that it also provides pleasure and utility. Aristotle thought that marriage could not rise to this level because of the inequality of the partners, but he did allow it a limited form of true friendship if the parties are virtuous.⁶⁰ For Tolomeo, it was neither limited nor rare, and it was his first of four reasons why conjugal is the greatest of all purely human loves. He also assimilates the three kinds of friendship to Augustine's three goods of marriage.⁶¹ He does not explain this (he says merely that diligent consideration will show it to be true), but it seems a reasonable application of Aristotle, if nothing like what Augustine had in mind, to say that the sharing of goods, the raising of children, and the administration of the home are useful goods and correspond to Augustine's fidelity, that the generation of offspring is another useful good obviously corresponding to the good of offspring, that the sexual relationship, and the pleasure of companionship constitute the pleasurable good and correspond to fidelity, and that the mutual concern of the spouses for each other's good constitutes the virtuous good and corresponds to the sacrament and fidelity. Tolomeo gives an example of this last kind of fidelity in *Historia ecclesiastica nova*: Eleanor of Castile, Edward I of England's wife, sucked poison out of her husband's wounds for a whole day after he had barely survived the attack of a Shiite assassin in the Holy Lands.⁶² In the same work he suggests how far a good wife might go in helping her husband by contrasting the two wives of Charles of Anjou: 'Attend how much his good wife did for the governing of the kingdom, and how much the bad one did harm, as was the case with Jezebel, wife of Achab.' Unlike Beatrice of Provence, he writes, the young Marguerite of Burgundy, while not a bad person, had little interest in government and allowed corrupt officials to undermine justice.⁶³

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII.12, and Book VIII, *passim*.

⁶¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, p. 233.

⁶² *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXIII.6, col. 1168.

⁶³ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXIII.19, col. 1175: 'Et attende hic de dicto rege, quantum facit ad gubernationem regni bona uxor, et quantum nocet mala, sicut apparet in Jezebel uxore Achab. Quanto enim tempore vixit prima uxor [...] regnum bene gubernabatur. Sed ipsi mortui, accepit rex unam juvenculam, quae de regimine non curabat, licit alias non esset mala; et tunc regnum propter malos officiales fuit in iustitia dissipatum.'

This interpretation is born out by Tolomeo's other reasons for the greatness of marital love. One of these co-opted the purely spiritual dictum of pseudo-Dionysius that the virtue of love consists of union. In marriage, Tolomeo writes, union is most highly developed, and in ways not characteristic of other unions: 'in living together, in common life, in the education of offspring, in sex, and in the purpose of doing things'. Further, a similarity in the way people live is a cause of love, which spouses experience more than others do through their common actions and similarity in age. The longer duration of marriage over other friendships also contributes to the greater depth of the relationship, because, according to Cicero, who certainly did not have marriage in mind, as a virtue love is a 'habit of mind in the way of nature consonant with reason'.⁶⁴

In stressing the mutually ordered society of men and women and the value of the marital relationships beyond procreation, in transforming the attitude toward women found in Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, and in proclaiming the greater dignity of woman, Tolomeo appears to have been striving for a theory of gender complementarity, even if, from our point of view, he never strayed far from gender polarity. For example, he cites Ambrose's *Hexameron* to show that the natural abilities of men and women are distinct and that women have priority in some areas — 'just as the man is found to be more capable in public ministries, so is the woman in domestic ones' — as well as to redirect the meaning of the rib to illustrate her position within the household and to signify that 'the man and woman are the principal parts of the home [...] without whom the home is not perfect'.⁶⁵ The rib is in the middle of the body, so it was

suitable that Eve was taken from the rib on account of social life in conjugal joining, in which indeed she holds the middle place in the domestic home between the children, servants, and the paterfamilias, of whom she is spouse: for he has three areas of action in the home, in two of which he has preeminence, because she is equal to the man with respect to generation, as was said above. But in the education of the offspring and the

⁶⁴ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.6, p. 233: 'Ex qua parte appetitus ipsorum ad dilectionem facilius inclinantur; est enim virtus, ut ait Tullius in sua Rhetorica, habitus mentis in modum naturae rationi consentaneus.'

⁶⁵ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.4, p. 227: 'Unde etiam Divus Ambrosius dicit [...] quod publicis [see below] officiis homo, mulier domesticis ministeriis habilior reperitur [...] aedificavit costam quam tulit de Adam in mulierem, quia vir, et mulier principales partes sunt domus, et ideo faciunt, et aedificant, nec sine eis perfecta est domus.' Ambrose, *De Paradiso*, II, writes: 'Sicut enim vir publicis officiis, ita mulier domesticis ministeriis habilior aestimatur.' The edition of *De operibus sex dierum* has *paucis* instead of *publicis*. This does not make much sense and is doubtless an incorrect expansion by the editor of an abbreviation.

governance of the home she is preferred to the children and servants, but is subjected to the man, and therefore formed from the middle part of the body.⁶⁶

Although Tolomeo's ideas doubtless support male supremacy, he himself viewed the proper social order more as a division of responsibilities. In addition to dividing responsibilities within the household and between the household and the public arenas, Tolomeo made analogies between the kinds of authority in the home and in government which show that he intended limited and divided authority in the home. In the early modern period such analogies normally centred on the absolute authority of the patriarch as monarch, but medieval writers often identified similarities to all of the Aristotelian forms of government in the relationships of the *paterfamilias* with spouse, children, and servants, and of the siblings with each other.⁶⁷ For Tolomeo, the man holds a superior, but not a supreme, position:

Aristotle [...] distinguishes in the perfect home four types of person, namely the *paterfamilias*, the wife, children, and male and female servants. The *paterfamilias* is in the same position in the home as the ruler in the city, or as the king in a kingdom, although differently, as will become clear below [...]. In this governance the *paterfamilias* is in a different position with respect to the three types already mentioned, since there is conjugal government with respect to the wife, paternal with respect to the children, and domitative with respect to the servants. Conjugal government differs from paternal just as political from regal [...] in the disposition and governance of the home the wife is subject to him; but with respect to the matrimonial goods they are equal, because there is a contract, offspring, and a sacrament.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.4, p. 227: 'Apparet fuisse congruum de costa Evam fuisse sumptam propter vitam socialem in conjugali copula, in qua quidem medium locum tenet in domestica domo inter filios, servos, et patremfamilias, cuius ext coniunx: habet enim triplicem actum in domo in quorum duobus praeeminentiam habet, quia respectu generationis par est cum viro, ut dictum est supra. In educatione vero proles, et gubernatione domus praeficitur fillis, et servis, sed subicitur viro, et ideo de media parte corporis formata.'

⁶⁷ For a general treatment of this subject, see Blythe, 'Family, Government', although I had little to say about Tolomeo there.

⁶⁸ *De operibus sex dierum*, ix.5, pp. 112–13: 'Distinguit enim Philosophus [...] in ipsa, scilicet domo perfecta, quattuor genera hominum, videlicet Patremfamilias, uxorem, filios, et servos et ancillas. Pater autem familias sic se habet in domo, sicut princeps in civitate, sicut rex in regno, licet differenter, ut inferius patebit [...] in hac gubernatione differenter se habet paterfamilias ad illa tria genera praedicta iam, quoniam ad uxorem coniugali regimine, ad filios paternali, sed ad servos dominativo. Coniugali autem regimen differt a paternali, sicut politicum a regali [...] uxor in dispensatione, et gubernatione domus eidem subiicitur; sed quantum ad matrimonialia pares sunt, quia sunt fides, proles, et sacramentum.' *Fides* could simply mean 'trust', but in the legalistic context here, and considering common feudal usage, I interpret it as referring to the marriage contract.

In *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo has more to say about the position of a woman in the household. The ideas there are compatible with those just discussed, although there are some differences because of the different emphases — in *De operibus sex dierum* on the relationship between spouses, in *De regimine principum* on the wife's function in internal household matters and the relationship of the household to the government of larger societies or on how a woman's participation in military affairs would affect her function. Since nature assigns affairs outside the home to the man and those inside to the woman, women had for Tolomeo the key, if not the dominant, role in family government: 'In the governance of their own household the characteristic act is the woman's.'⁶⁹ In two historical analogies Tolomeo compares rule in the household with specific forms of civil government and shows that he intended a sharing of powers. The first compares the home to the Roman Republic, which had two consuls, one for war and another for governance. Tolomeo often characterizes the republic as 'political': rule by law depending upon the people and not the ruler's will. The second analogy compares rule in the household to that among the Amazons, who had two queens similar to the two consuls.⁷⁰

This does not mean that the husband and wife have equal authority, even at home. Tolomeo, and all other medieval political thinkers, accepted the husband's rightful rule over his wife, but he limited that power more than most medieval and early modern writers, in *De operibus sex dierum* denying its absolute character and restricting it to matters implied by the marriage contract and canon law. By calling it political, he denied that the husband could rule by his own will and allows the possibility of the wife running the household on a day-to-day basis, Tolomeo's point in *De regimine principum*. Above all he insisted that the man alone cannot provide all the domestic needs: 'The woman has certain acts in the domestic home, which are not suited to the man, as Aristotle reports, and as we perceive, on account of which it is said in Ecclesiasticus 37: "Where there is no fence one's possessions will be seized, and where there is no woman a person in need groans."⁷¹

⁶⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.6.2: 'In gubernatione suae familiae proprius actus est mulieris.'

⁷⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.6: 'Sicut in politica officia sunt distincta ita et in oeconomia, ut paterfamilias ad exteriora negotia, mulieres autem ad intrinsecos actus familiae. Cuius quidem argumentum assumere possumus ex parte Romanae reipublicae quae, ut tradunt historiae, duos habent consules: unus intendebat bellicis rebus, alter rempublicam gubernabat. Hoc idem et de Amazonibus scribitur, in quorum regno seu monarchia duae erant reginae sive monarchae quae sic distinguebantur in officiis sicut de Romanis consulibus est dictum.'

⁷¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XV.2, p. 223: 'Quosdam vero actus habet mulier in domestica domo, qui viro non conveniunt, ut Philosophus tradit, et ad sensum videmus, propter quod Ecclesiasticus

The fundamental need for women in the home is the major reason Tolomeo rejects all the arguments for women soldiers. This comes out most strongly in his treatment of an analogy between female humans and animals, among whom, according to a medieval commonplace, female rapacious birds and some beasts are more ferocious and better fighters than the males of their species. This and other such ideas about animal behaviour came largely from Aristotle, though this one is unusual in that it could be used to support a non-traditional role for women. It is arguable to what degree some of Aristotle's conclusions about animal behaviour came from his preconceptions about gender roles, but there is little doubt that his formulations often played into such suppositions. Tolomeo and most other medieval writers followed Aristotle, for example, in referring to male worker bees and a king bee, and often cited this to give natural support to human monarchy.⁷²

Tolomeo, like Thomas, Giles of Rome, and Aristotle, denied the applicability of the atypical analogy with violent female animals. The comparison fails because only humans are domestic and civil animals.⁷³ In Tolomeo's mind women were destined for important authority, based on strengths that are different from those of men, and this is the primary reason to bar them from the military, not because they are incapable. Today, this might not seem much, but he sincerely believed that a woman played an essential role, complementary to that of the man. A good woman deserves the highest respect. The Virgin Mary was the supreme example, but on a lesser scale, the same applied to any woman who virtuously performed her household duties:

Therefore, I must say simply that a woman ought not to be exposed to matters of war, but ought to live in the home and take care of household matters, as I said above. Solomon at the end of Proverbs commends a woman's fortitude in a song that he composed using each of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in which he attributes all of her fortitude to domestic action: 'Who will find a strong woman? Her price is far beyond any limits'. He implies that she should be highly revered if she is skilled in the things he mentions. The first is the art of spinning: 'She sought wool and flax, and laboured with the counsel of her hands', thus showing that this was a proper part of her offices. As is recorded among his

xxxvii [actually 36.27] dicitur: "ubi non est sepes diripietur possessio, et ubi non est mulier ingemiscit aeger."

⁷² Aristotle, *History of Animals*, v.21.553a.25, *Generation of Animals*, III.10.759b.2ff. Mayhew, *Female in Aristotle's Biology*, pp. 19–24, argues persuasively that scholars have misinterpreted Aristotle's views on insects. On the one hand, Aristotle calls the wasps' leader a 'mother', and on the other he expresses uncertainty about the sex of either the king bee or mother wasp.

⁷³ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.6. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.92.3, and Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, III.1.7, fols 246^v–247^r.

deeds, Charlemagne also mandated that his dearly beloved daughters take up the distaff and spindle and be industrious with them. Further on, Solomon added other womanly acts referring to the domestic home, such as taking care of children, running the household, providing for her home, honouring the friends of her husband, and making up for his defects. These are proper things for a wife to do, and they pertain to the good of marriage, as is clear from what is written about Abigail, wife of Nabal of Carmel. Since such solicitude involves many disturbances, as the Lord says in Luke: 'Martha, Martha, you are solicitous and disturbed about many things', and since such things should be the object of virtue and fortitude, the Wise One quoted above calls such a woman strong, not because she shows fortitude toward works of war, but because she patiently guides her household, as I showed above.⁷⁴

In contrast to this ideal view of virtuous domestic women, Tolomeo on rare occasions presents women as tempters of men, and once he even reduces marriage to the lesser of evils. In this he follows a common patristic and medieval theme of women as inherently lustful and corrupting creatures, who beginning with Eve continually strive to lead men astray. This is one more reason why one could not argue for the inclusion of women in non-domestic professions, even under strict regulation. Their very presence endangers men by providing them with the opportunity of sin. For this reason Tolomeo criticizes the Spartans for giving women too much freedom of movement, which created 'a snare of lust'.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.6.5: 'Dicendum est ergo simpliciter mulierem non debere exponi bellicis rebus, sed in domo quiescere, curam genere rei familiaris, ut dictum est supra. Unde et in hoc Salomon in fine Proverbiorum fortitudinem mulieris commendat, speciale de ipsa componens canticum sub litteris hebraici alphabeti, ac totum circa eam ad domesticam referens actionem: "Mulierem," inquit, "fortem quis inveniet? procul et de finibus pretium eius," quasi multum sit reverenda si habeat quae sequuntur; unde primo ponit artem filandi: "Quaesivit," inquit, "lanam et linum, et operata est consilio manuum suarum," per hoc volens ostendere quod istud sit proprium earum officium; propter quod et in gestis Caroli Magni scribitur quod filiabus suis, quas intime dilexit, colo et fuso mandavit insistere et operosas esse. Ulterius Salomon subiungit alios actus mulieris qui referuntur ad domesticam domum, ut est filiorum curam habere, familiam dispensare, suae domui providere, amicos viri sui honorare ac defectus eius supplere, quae sunt propriae operationes coniugis et ad bona matrimonii pertinentes, ut de Abigail uxore Nabal Carmeli scribitur, sicut patet in I Regum. Sed quia talis sollicitudo multas habet perturbationes, ut Dominus dicit in Luca: "Martha," inquit, "Martha, sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima," cum talia sint obiectum virtutis et fortitudinis; ideo dictus Sapiens talem mulierem fortem vocat, non quidem fortitudine ad opera bellica sed ad patienter gubernandam familiam, ut superius est ostensum.' Tolomeo's references are to Proverbs 31. 10, 13; Einhard, *Life of Charlemagne*, chap. 19; 1 Kings (1 Samuel) 25; Luke 10. 41. Each of the verses in Proverbs 31. 10–31 begins with a different Hebrew letter in alphabetical order.

⁷⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.14.5: 'Dabatur libertas mulieribus, unde efficiebantur lascivae. De hoc enim a Philosopho reprehenduntur quod suas mulieres non restringebant a discursibus, quod mulieri est laqueus libidinis.'

Tolomeo is more evenhanded than some other medieval writers, in that he admits that the distraction could go both ways and that sex made both men and women weaker in battle and presumably in other activities as well. He warns of

the dangers of commerce with women, since the venereal act corrupts prudent judgement, as Aristotle tells us in *Ethics*, Book VII. It is impossible to understand anything during it, and the result is enervation of the manly spirit. The histories relate that after Julius Caesar decreased the extent of war, he decreed that all delights should be kept away from the camps, especially women. Cyrus, King of the Persians, could not subjugate the Lydians because they were extremely strong and accustomed to labour, and he finally succeeded in taming them, even though they were disposed to virtue and fortitude, only after games and venereal activities enervated them. Vegetius wrote about the ancient Romans at the beginning of his first Book: 'Therefore, they were always perfect in war, because they were not broken by delights or desires for pleasure.' What more is there to say, since even the strongest horses, who otherwise are the boldest fighters and smell war from afar, are distracted from fighting by the presence of a mare. For this reason, as the histories relate, the Amazons accepted no men in their own battle lines.⁷⁶

If contact with women corrupts reason and undermines a man's natural character, one would be forced to question the institution of marriage itself. Early Christian teaching tolerated marriage but treated it as a distinctly worse choice than celibacy, and some even questioned the possibility of salvation for the married. Augustine developed what became the official church teaching by sanctifying marriage for those not called to the religious life and stressing the complementary and godly work of both partners in a Christian marriage. But the older idea persisted, and although Tolomeo normally held marriage in even higher regard than Augustine, he followed up his attack on lustful women with questioning the suitability of marriage for soldiers. Much of the argument could apply to marriage in general, though Tolomeo never extends it in this way:

⁷⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.5.9: 'Quarta ratio sumitur ex periculoso commercio mulieris, quia actus venereus corrumpit aestimationem prudentiae, ut tradit Philosophus in 7 *Ethica*, et impossibile est in eo aliquid intelligere, ex qua causa virilis animus enervatur; unde ferunt historiae Julium Caesarem, cum bellum immineret, iussisse suas omnes delicias separari a castris et praecipue mulieres. Cyrus etiam rex Persarum, cum Lydos subiugare non posset quia fortissimi erant et ad labores assueti, tandem per ludos et usum veneris ibidem constitutos virtute et fortitudine enervatos perdomuit. De ipsis insuper Romanis antiquis sic scribit Vegetius in principio primi libri: "Ideo ipsos perfectos ad bellum semper, quia nullis voluptatibus nullisque deliciis frangebantur." Quid plura? quia etiam equi fortissimi, qui alias sunt audacissimi ad pugnandum et procul odorant bellum, ex praesentia equae distrahuntur a pugna; propter hanc ergo causam ipsae Amazones, ut historiae narrant, nullum virum in sua recipiebant acie.' The Aristotle reference is to *Ethics*, VII.10.1152a.6–9; the Vegetius reference is to *On the Military*, I.3, although the quotation is not exact; see also I.28.

The third thing about the Spartans that Aristotle disputes is whether the knights ought to have wives or be otherwise linked with women, which distracts them from fighting. The act of carnal pleasure softens the spirit and makes it less virile, as I said above, and it is Plato's opinion, as Theophrastus reports, that it is not expedient for those who attend to military things to marry. Aristotle, in the passage in Book II already mentioned, disagrees with that argument on the grounds that warriors are naturally prone to be lascivious. A certain book, *On Problems*, which Emperor Frederick translated from the Greek into Latin, explains the reason for this, and in the passage that I just cited Aristotle mentions one of the poet Hesiod's fables, which joined Mars to Venus. If they were to abstain from women, they would approach males sexually, and for this reason Aristotle disagrees with Plato's opinion, since it is less evil to have carnal relations with women than to fall into vile and shameful acts. Thus, Augustine says that a whore acts in the world as the bilge in a ship or the sewer in a palace: 'Remove the sewer, and you will fill the palace with a stench.' Similarly, concerning the bilge, he says: 'Take away whores from the world, and you will fill it with sodomy.' For this reason Augustine says in *The City of God*, Book XIII, that the earthly city made the use of harlots a licit foulness. Aristotle himself says that the vice of sodomy exists because of depraved nature and perverse usage, and with respect to such things one should not even speak in terms of continence or incontinence since they are not in themselves things delectable to human nature, so that one cannot refer to moderate virtue in this case. This agrees with Paul, who in the Book of Romans calls such acts 'passions of ignominy'.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.14.6: 'Tertium autem quod Aristoteles disputat de Lacedaemoniorum politia est circa milites: utrum deberent uxores habere vel mulieribus coniungi, quia si hoc est distrahuntur a pugna. Ex actu enim carnalis delectionis mollescit animus et minus virilis redditur, ut dictum est supra: et sententia est Platonis, ut Theophrastus refert, quod militaribus rebus intentis non expedit nubere. Sed Aristoteles istud reprobatur in dicto II libro, quia bellatores naturaliter sunt prони ad luxuriam. Causa autem assignatur in quodam libello *De problematibus*, translato e graeco in latinum Frederico Imperatore: sed Philosophus ibidem introducit Hesiodi poetae fabulam, qui Martem cum Venere iunxit. Unde si abstineant ab mulieribus, prolabantur in masculos; et ideo Aristoteles in hoc reprobatur Platonis sententiam, quia minus malum est mulieribus carnaliter commisceri quam in vilia declinare flagitia. Unde Augustinus dicit quod hoc facit meretrix in mundo quod sentina in navi vel cloaca in palatio: "Tolle cloacum, et replebis foetore palatium"; et similiter de sentina: "Tolle meretrices de mundo, et replebis ipsum sodomia." Propter quam causam idem Augustinus ait in XIII *De civitate Dei* quod terrena civitas usum scortorum licitam turpitudinem fecit. Hoc etiam vitium sodomiticum ipse Philosophus in VII *Ethicorum* dicit accidere propter vitiosam naturam et perversum consuetudinem, et horum etiam non est continentiam vel incontinentiam assignare cum non sint per se delectabilia humanae naturae, unde medium virtutis ibi esse non potest; et hoc concordat cum Apostolo ad Romanis, qui tales actus *ignominiae passiones* appellat.' Tolomeo's references are to *De regimine principum*, IV.5.9; Aristotle, *Politics*, II.9.1269b.28–29, and *Ethics*, VII.5.1148b.28–30; the pseudo-Aristotelian *Problems*, dedicated to Frederick II by its first Latin translator; Augustine, *On Order*, II.4.12, and *City of God*, XIV.18 (not Book XIII); and Romans 1.26. Although Augustine expresses the sentiments ascribed to him, I could not locate the exact quotations about sewers and whores.

Although Tolomeo does not take a position on whether to allow marriage for soldiers, the implication, following early Christian writing, is that women, either as wives or prostitutes, should be tolerated only as necessary to prevent worse vice. Eliding from marriage to prostitution allows him to enlist Augustine and conflate these two female roles.

The worst possible sin is the confusion of gender roles involved in homosexuality. Although Tolomeo always sought to preserve 'normal' gender behaviour, he shows particular horror for this violation. Prostitutes, no matter how disgusting they are, are still performing natural sexual acts. But for men to have sex with other men is another matter. In the political sphere it would be grounds for the deposition of a ruler. In *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii* Tolomeo cites effeminacy as one of the reasons that the last emperor of Charlemagne's line, Arnulph, was unsuited to his office, causing the Pope to transfer the title to Otto rather than Arnulph's son.⁷⁸ Likewise, *De iurisdictione imperii* mentions that Pope Zachary deposed the last Merovingian king because he was useless and effeminate.⁷⁹

Since all men risk corruption around women, Tolomeo argues that nature imposes limits on women: an inborn sense of shame, restrictions such as ankle-length clothing, marriage rings, and servitude to husbands. In the particular case of military service, these restrictions conflict with women having the freedom and privileges that international law provides for knights. Were they to share them, men would be unprotected. It would also undermine the Bible, as well as woman's passive and obedient nature.⁸⁰

Problems, IV.7, asks the question why men who continually ride are more inclined to sexual intercourse, but does not specifically mention warriors. The answer ascribes this to the effects of heat and motion stimulating the genitals and causing the body to develop large pores, which are conducive to sexual desire. In ancient Greece, soldiers were not generally cavalry, but the medieval knights were.

⁷⁸ Tolomeo Fiadoni (Anonymous), *Tractatus anonymus de origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii*, in *Determinatio compendiosa de iurisdictione imperii*, ed. by Marius Krammer, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Fontes Iuris Germanici Antiqui, 1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1909), pp. 66–75 (pp. 70–71).

⁷⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 14, p. 31.

⁸⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.6.3–4: 'natura mulieri fraena providit, ut est verecundia quae est praecipuum vinculum eius ut Hieronymus scribit ad Cellantiam virginem, talaes vestes, annulus in digito, servitus viri; sic enim Scriptura sacra testatur quoniam sub viri potestate eris. Bellicis autem rebus intendere in republica libertatem meretur, unde et militibus iura gentium speciales apices privilegiorum concedunt [...]. Et praeterea natura mulieris est a viro pati et non agere;

This more sympathetic view of the woman's nature if she does not violate gender roles brings us back to Tolomeo's much more common concern with the family. Domestic duties were necessarily somewhat different before sin, and Tolomeo wrote that in that ideal situation women possessed qualities more similar to those of men than later women did. Adam first named his mate 'virago', which, Tolomeo suggests as one of several possibilities, may be because she acted like a man (*vir*), 'that is, she does manly works and is of masculine vigour'.⁸¹ Tolomeo points out that the ancients applied this word to strong women, which is appropriate for Eve, who, like Adam, was created in an optimal form. Two somewhat conflicting ideas compete here: the first, that God intended to produce a woman capable of perfection 'in her own grade'; the second, that as a defective man, a woman can never really attain human perfection. Resolving them is perhaps further complicated by the unstated consideration that as a direct creation of God, the first woman cannot be considered defective by virtue of a birth stemming from the failure of male semen, as later women are, though Tolomeo took a stab at this by saying that what nature does through semen God did through Adam's rib.⁸² The uneasy compromise here, trying to balance gender neutrality and complementarity or polarity, is that the first woman approached the masculine character only to lose this when she was renamed Eve, which Isidore derived from 'life' or 'calamity', and took on the womanly duties necessary in the postlapsarian world.

The ancients used the word *virago* to refer to admirable women, and to medieval thinkers this suggested that women even after sin could aspire to manly virtue. There was disgust at the reversal of certain gender roles, but the perception of what was essential to those roles was more flexible in the Middle Ages than later. Women taking on roles seen as male by those raised in the West until recently, where nearly all responsible positions outside the home were held by men, was less unthinkable for medieval people. As Caroline Walker Bynum has pointed out in several works, medieval religious writers and artists presented various exemplary men and women, and even God, with both male and female

pugnare autem summa est actio, cum sit actus fortitudinis qui solus, si laudabiliter exerceatur, meretur coronam.'

⁸¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.5, pp. 230–31: 'Praeclarus tamen doctor Ysidorus lib. xi dicit quod virago dicitur, quia virum agit, hoc est opera virilia facit, et masculini vigoris est.' The Vulgate, Genesis 2. 23, says that Adam called her virago because she came from man (*vir*). English translations usually say he called her woman because she came from man.

⁸² *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.5, p. 230.

characteristics, and the fluidity of gender boundaries was even more pronounced in scientific views, in which 'women were merely less of what men were more'.⁸³ Medieval medical and scientific views of sex and gender were complex and not fully determinate, resisting binary categorization and making possible various combinations of masculine and feminine traits. For example, the fourteenth-century medical writer Iacopo da Forlì used three indicia of male and female characteristics: complexion (the balance of qualities), disposition, and physique. A particular individual might be feminine, masculine, or even indeterminate with respect to any of these. The medical literature is full of speculations about hermaphrodites, and St Wilgefortis avoided marriage by growing a beard and mustache.⁸⁴ In *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, Barbara Newmann writes about the prevalence in the early church of the virago ideal for spiritual women and the later development of another ideal, never completely replacing the other, which emphasized distinctive feminine qualities, equal to or even superior to masculine ones.⁸⁵ Abelard advanced the virago view in the twelfth century, and it continued to inform male religious views especially for many centuries. This figure was later revived in the series of writings praising famous women by late medieval writers like Christine de Pizan and Giovanni Boccaccio.

Tolomeo gives many examples of women taking on masculine roles, and he states that another reason for using the term *virago* is that the first woman 'did not know about feminine passion, which state is suitable for virgins [*virginibus*]'.⁸⁶ Many other authors also punned on the words *virgo* and *virago*, and they sometimes wrote about female rulers, warriors, and occasionally scholars. Tolomeo, for example, in *Annales* under the year 1090, calls attention to the wife and daughter

⁸³ Carolin Walker Bynum, 'The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 39 (1986), 399–439 (pp. 434–36). See also, Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), chap. 4; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

⁸⁴ Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference*, pp. 203–07, for Wilgefortis, citing Vern L. Bullough, 'Sex Education in Medieval Christianity', *Journal of Sex Research*, 13 (1977), 190, who also lists other female saints with beards or who were cross-dressers. See also Cary Nederman and Jacqui True, 'The Third Sex: The Idea of the Hermaphrodite in Twelfth-Century Europe', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6 (1996), 497–517.

⁸⁵ Barbara Newmann, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995).

⁸⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.5, p. 231: 'Vel virago dicitur [...] eo quod ignoret foemineam passionem, qui status virginibus convenit.'

of the philosopher Manegold von Lautenbach, who, he says, were 'exceptional in philosophy'.⁸⁷ An extreme version of a virago would be someone who disguised herself as a man and performed male activities so well that she would be unmasked only by accident. One such a woman was a mythical female pope called Pope Joan in later popular versions. Tolomeo was one of several Dominican writers responsible for transmitting early versions of her story. He followed Martinus Polonus's *Chronicon* closely, but made several changes:

He [John VIII], as is asserted, deluded the church, since a woman was elevated to the highest pontificate who wore male habit and acted like a man. Martinus reports the way that she came to that status, being brought up as a girl in Athens by her lover, in male habit. There she was so imbued with divine and other writings, that her equal could not be found in any science. Then it happened, that coming to Rome and reading Terence she had great masters as her disciples and students. And since there was in the city a high opinion of her life and knowledge, she was harmoniously elevated to the papacy by the cardinals, clergy, and people. But as pope she was impregnated by her familiar. But not knowing the time of birth, perhaps since she was inexperienced about conception up to that time, she gave birth while on her way to the Lateran from St Peter, brought to distress between the church of St Clement and the Coliseum. She afterwards died in the same place, as they say, as she was buried. And since then the lord pope always takes the same path, because, it is believed, of detestation of what she did. Nor is she placed in the catalogue of the supreme pontiffs, on account of the deformity of what she did.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Annales*, 1090, p. 21.

⁸⁸ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XVI.10, cols 1013–14: 'Hic, ut asseretur, Ecclesiam delusit, eo quod in habitu virili, et actibus similiter, foemina in summum assumitur pontificem. Modum autem quomodo ad istum statum venit sic Martinus refert, quia in puellari aetate in habitu virili a quodam suo amasio Athenis nutrita fuit, ibique sic divinis, et aliis scripturis imbuta est, ut sibi par non inveniretur in quacumque scientia. Adeo vero sic profecit, ut veniens Romam, et Terentium legens, magnos Magistros discipulos et auditores heberet. Et cum in Urbe in vita, at scientia magnae foret opinionis, in Papam concorditer assumitur a Cardinalibus, a Clero, et populo. Sed in Papatu a suo familiari impregnatur. Verumtamen tempus partus ignorans, forte sicut inexperta conceptus usque in illam horum, cum de Sancto Petro tenderet Lateranum, angustia inter Sancti Clementis Ecclesiam, et Coliseum ibidem peperit; et postea mortua, et in eodem loco, ut dicitur, sepulta fuit. Et quia Dominus Papa eandem viam semper obequitat, inde a poteris creditur, quod ad detestationem facti hoc fuerit ordinatum. Nec ponitur in catalogo Summorum Pontificum, propter facti deformitatem.' See Martinus Polonus, *Chronicon*, p. 428. Apparently the legend of a female pope, though not in the form Tolomeo relates, was first reported as an unverified rumour about an unnamed pope in the unfinished *Universal Chronicle* of the Dominican writer Jean de Mailly around 1255 in Metz and was then repeated and modified by a succession of Dominican writers. See Alain Boureau, *The Myth of Pope Joan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 107–64, for Dominican and Franciscan sources.

Some of Tolomeo's revisions of Martin are minor. Tolomeo puts the Popess, as she was later called, after, instead of before, Benedict III (855–58 in reality, but according to Tolomeo's dating 881–83), and he drops Mainz as her place of birth, eliminating a contradiction between this and her supposed English nationality. Other changes are more significant, such as giving her a number, John VIII. Because of the confusion that existed in the numbering of the Johns, and the general inaccuracy of dates for this period, it was not difficult to do this and to put her between what were in reality successive popes, Benedict III and Nicholas I (858–67; 885–94 in Tolomeo's dating).⁸⁹ Although Tolomeo, following Martin, says that she was not listed in the official catalogue of popes, he surprisingly does not call her an antipope. By listing her as the 107th pope with a number of her own, Tolomeo implies that he recognized her legitimacy and that she was normally not listed only because of the scandal of her papacy. I used the literal translation of *deformita* as 'deformity', to suggest Joan's abandonment of her proper gender role, but I could just as properly have rendered it as 'vileness'. Either meaning would include the crimes of defrauding the church by pretending to be a man and having sexual relations while pope, but Tolomeo seemed to have real admiration for her scholarly accomplishments, about which he was much more specific than Martin. His mention of Terence was also an addition, which is possibly related to Terence's reputation for lascivious dramas.⁹⁰

We have seen that Tolomeo believed that natural gender roles existed even before sin. So although he may have envisioned a masculinized woman as ideal, he would not have wanted women to have the same professions as men, at least in general, and certainly not to be priests or bishops. However, the idea of Eve as virago, whose masculine qualities were lost after sin, is in a limited way analogous to Tolomeo's conception, to be discussed in future chapters, of the postlapsarian political situation, when the loss of political virtue through sin made tyranny necessary but allowed the possibility of virtuous citizens, such as Roman republicans and northern Italians somehow being able to reclaim the original virtue and

⁸⁹ The dates in the Muratori edition cannot be reconciled with the narrative, presumably because of the corruption of the text. The dates I give for these three popes in Tolomeo's dating come from going back to the reign of Leo IV, whom Tolomeo says ruled for eight years, beginning in 873. Doing this, and changing the dates of Benedict and John to correspond with this and the number of years he said they ruled, results in the consistency for the dates of the next pope, Nicholas I.

⁹⁰ Interestingly, Hrotswitha von Gandersheim, the famous eleventh-century virago, playwright, historian, and canoness, stated in the preface to her plays that she patterned her plays after Terence, transmuting his lasciviousness into Christian moralism.

return to the pristine condition. In this world, women could presumably still strive for their original state as virago, while continuing to perform the necessary division of labour with men.

Women taking on traditional male roles in the Middle Ages was especially notable among the nobility. In the absence of a suitable male heir, a woman could in many places become the lord of a fief and enjoy the rights and powers of that position. Although husbands or other male relatives generally took over the rule of women's fiefs, a woman often ruled when her husband was absent or, in widowhood, on her own behalf or her son's. Male vassals might take advantage of their lord's sex, but they rarely displayed the extreme reluctance of many modern males to have a female superior. And since the essence of the lord-vassal relationship was military service, a female lord would be expected to provide a complement of knights to her lord, even if she herself only infrequently commanded them in battle and even more rarely fought. In part this was because of the belief that fighting was men's business, in part because of the dominance of male knights, who had to begin their extensive training in childhood, which no women shared. But the idea of a female warrior exercised a fascination to medieval people, something apparently shared in this age of *Kill Bill*.

A few medieval commentators on Aristotle discuss this kind of virago, but other than Tolomeo, Giles of Rome was the only one to do so in any depth, and his treatment is far less detailed than that of Tolomeo, simply refuting several reasons why women should fight. Tolomeo dignifies the proposition that women should serve in the military with full scholastic treatment, something extremely rare in his writings. He devotes several chapters of *De regimine principum* to a formal presentation of arguments for the proposition, followed by arguments against it, and concluding with responses to the arguments for it.⁹¹ Unlike Giles he accepted several of these arguments why women would make good fighters, though ultimately he concluded that this did not justify them actually fighting.

There were many legends in the Middle Ages about women fighters, from ancient Amazons, to Germanic and Norse heroines, to women crusaders. Tolomeo would not have felt compelled to bring this up, which he does only in *De regimine principum*, except that it was discussed in the Aristotelian texts that

⁹¹ For a close look at Giles of Rome's discussion, more on medieval views of military women in general, and a detailed presentation of Tolomeo's argument, see my article 'Women in the Military: Scholastic Arguments and Medieval Images of Female Warriors', *History of Political Thought*, 22 (2001), 242–69; also available at <<http://www.imprint.co.uk/blythe/>> [accessed June 2008]. Much of the material about women fighters used here comes from this article.

formed the basis of his analysis. The seminal text was from Plato's *Republic*. Although this was not directly available, Aristotle summarized parts of it in his *Politics*.

Plato believed that males were naturally superior, and he favoured the subordination of women in general, but for pragmatic reasons he argued for their inclusion as guardians in his ideal polity. He explained that although men were generally better at all occupations, some women were fit for all of them, and a few women could even be better in a given field than most men, so that it would be wasteful to prevent them from using their abilities for the community.⁹² Plato thought that women could participate, albeit rarely as equals, in all fields, and specifically mentions medicine, music, philosophy, government, warfare, and athletics.⁹³ He thought that it is obvious that men and women should fight together.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, he expected only a few exceptional women to equal the average man in anything.

What survives of this argument in Aristotle's *Politics* is a short statement made without comment in the context of showing the differences between Plato's *Republic* and his later work, *The Laws*: '[Socrates] certainly thinks that women ought to fight together with the burghers and share in their education.'⁹⁵ A few sentences later Aristotle adds, without specifying women, that the system of education in *The Laws* is the same as that in the *Republic*. Aristotle's formulation is ambiguous: did Plato mean that women should share all education or only military training? He meant all education, but he put most emphasis on warfare and athletics, and this is how Tolomeo and most other medieval writers who commented on this passage understood it.

⁹² Plato, *Republic*, v.451d–e. There has been considerable recent discussion of the roles Plato allows women in his ideal state and on Plato's views on women in general. See, for example, Natalie Harris Bluestone, *Women and the Ideal Society: Plato's Republic and Modern Myths of Gender* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987); *Feminist Interpretations of Plato*, ed. by Nancy Tuana (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); and Walter Soffer, 'Socrates' Proposals Concerning Women: Feminism or Fantasy?', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), 157–73.

⁹³ Plato, *Republic*, v.455d–e.

⁹⁴ Plato, *Republic*, v.466e.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, II.6.1264b.37–39: 'uxores quidem existimat oportere simul bellare et disciplina participare eadem municipibus'. I have chosen to use the word *burgher* for the more usual *guardian* since this is closer to the Latin translation. For Aristotle's views on women, see Richard Mulgan, 'Aristotle and the Political Role of Women', *History of Political Thought*, 15 (1994), 179–202.

Thomas Aquinas, and most of the few other medieval commentators who mention Plato's view, simply paraphrase Aristotle. But when he was considering the chapter immediately before the reference to women soldiers, in which Aristotle questions Socrates' desire to have wives and property in common, Thomas defended a position we know from what we have read in *De operibus sex dierum* would have appealed to Tolomeo. 'It is futile', Thomas writes, 'to argue from an analogy with the beasts that women ought to be treated the same as men, since beasts do not concern themselves with household management.'⁹⁶ Thomas explains further: 'Socrates says that women ought to be treated the same as men — namely that they should cultivate the fields and fight [Aristotle hadn't mentioned this here] — and uses an analogy with the beasts [...]. But beasts do not participate in household life, in which women have their own proper work, to which it is important for them to attend and always abstain from civil work.'⁹⁷

After Tolomeo notes Plato's opinion as presented in the *Politics*, he supports it with three kinds of evidence: analogy with the natural world, the physical nature of women, and historical practice. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the first two categories of argument, as well as his example of the Amazons, and his ultimate rejection of the arguments on the basis of the woman's role in the household. Here I will simply mention a few more of his descriptions of historical and legendary women lords and warriors.

Tolomeo narrates the exploits of several women lords in *Annales*. He calls Countess Matilda of Tuscany, ally of the papacy in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, 'a most powerful woman who often fought against the Emperor Henry and defeated him'.⁹⁸ He reports on Berengaria, daughter of the King of Castile, who after her father and brother died, and despite the fact that there was an older sister, invaded Castile, humiliated the counts opposing her, and installed

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, II.5.1264b.7–9: 'Inconveniens autem et ex bestiis fieri parabolam, quia oportet eadem tractare mulieres viris, quibus oeconomiae nihil attinet.'

⁹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *In octo libros politicarum Aristotelis expositio* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1971) (available electronically beginning at <<http://www.corpusthomicum.org/cpo.html>> [accessed June 2009]), II.5.12: 'Secundo circa mulieres dicit, quod Socrates dicebat, quod mulieres debebant eadem tractare cum viris, ut scilicet colerunt agros et pugnarent, et alia huiusmodi facerent sicut viri: et accipiebat parabolam, id est similitudinem a bestiis, in quibus feminae similia operantur masculis. Sed Aristotelis istud dicit esse inconveniens, nec esse simile: quia bestiae nihil participant de vita oeconomica, in qua quidem vita mulieres habent quaedam propria opera, quibus oportet eas intendere, et abstinere semper ab operibus civilibus'; II.6.2: 'Socrates existimavit quod oportebat mulieres bellare et alia similia facere viris.'

⁹⁸ *Annales*, 1065–1115, pp. 5–35.

her son Fernando as king.⁹⁹ Tolomeo defends female monarchy through his conviction that King Stephen of England died childless by a just judgement of God because he prevented the rightful monarch, Henry I's daughter Matilda, from coming to power.¹⁰⁰

These women did not themselves fight, though this was not unthinkable. But, as we have seen, gender reversal had the potential to upset the very kind of natural and social arrangements that Tolomeo stresses were implicit in the first creation of humans, and this was especially true for women warriors. Fascinated horror about this is shown explicitly in the late thirteenth-century German poem *The Ladies Tournament*, which Tolomeo was unlikely to have known, but which doubtless reflected widespread attitudes, and it accords with Tolomeo's major argument. In it, a group of fictional ladies dispute the relationship of men's and women's honour. The 'daring woman' claims that there is no difference, that women should bear arms and seek fame in war and sport. She convinces the others to take part in a military tournament in which each woman takes the name of a favoured male knight. The males debate how to react: one argues for wife-beating, saying, 'If women elect to go jousting/men will have to run the household.' Sarah Westphal-Wihl comments, 'His anxiety comes remarkably close to the realization that the division of labor by sex is not a biological specialization but a social convention dividing men and women into two reversible categories.'¹⁰¹

Most of Tolomeo's examples of women who actually fought come from classical or legendary sources: the Amazons, who, he says, founded the strongest kingdom in the east and conquered all Asia, the Scythians, and the Tartars, among whom women served with the men.¹⁰² For example, he modifies a story from Herodotus retold by Valerius Maximus and Justin the Spaniard, Roman historians of the early Christian centuries, about Tomyris, Queen of Scythia, who

⁹⁹ *Annales*, 1214, pp. 101–02.

¹⁰⁰ *Annales*, 1156, p. 59.

¹⁰¹ 'Der vrouwen turnei', in *Gesamtabenteuer: Hundert altdeutsche Erzählungen*, ed. by Friederick Heinrich von der Hagen, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Tübingen, 1850; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), I, 371–82, as reported in Sarah Westphal-Wihl, 'The Ladies' Tournament: Marriage, Sex, and Honor in Thirteenth-Century Germany', *Signs*, 14 (1989), 371–98 (p. 394). In the poem, traditional gender roles are restored after the joust.

¹⁰² *Deregimine principum*, IV.5.4: 'Huius autem argumentum assumitur de regno Amazonum, quod fortissimum fuit in Oriente et quasi totam Asiam tertiam partem orbis subiugaverunt sibi, ut historiae tradunt, quae de Scythis orientalibus traxerunt originem; unde et apud eosdem Scythias, de quibus descenderunt Tartari, mulieres rebus bellicis exponuntur et cum suis militant vires.'

gathered an army to resist the Persian king Cyrus and ambushed him in the mountains, slaughtering two hundred thousand and capturing Cyrus himself: 'The Queen ordered his decapitated head to be sunk in a wineskin full of blood and shouted to him abusively: "You thirst for blood; drink blood," as if', Tolomeo adds, 'to signify that the disgraceful death he suffered was proof of his barbarity.'¹⁰³

Tolomeo's conception of women displays a deep ambivalence: women are a necessary part of God's creation and capable of the greatest virtue, but are generally weak, prone to sin, and a constant threat to men — especially when they cross gender lines and interact directly with men in male occupations. Some women are capable of great learning, but women in general are defective in their reason, as well as being timid and fearful. Exercise can make them strong, but they are feeble by nature. All this confirms for Tolomeo that crossing gender lines is dangerous and keeps women from their true calling. For their own good, the good of their families, and men's good they should remain in home or cloister, where their talents direct them.

Tolomeo's treatment of women, though far from a modern feminist one, usually lacks the hostile tone common to much medieval writing. Much more than other scholastic writers he struggled to reconcile a theory of gender complementarity with the gender polarity that was promoted by Aristotelian and other classical texts. He could not reject the negative consequences of Greek science, but instinctively, perhaps through his knowledge of several elite women, he perceived women as capable, able to be companions and partners of men as well as the mothers of their children, able to organize and direct their households, and when the need arose, to pursue and administer a political entity. He believed that the original sinless woman was a virago, perhaps as inherently capable as a man,

¹⁰³ *De regimine principum*, III.8.3: 'Narrat enim historia quod dicta regina [Tomyris] congregavit exercitum contra ipsum [Cyrus], Scythas videlicet et Massegetas et Parthos, et in quibusdam montibus dicta regina insidiis compositis invasit castra eiusdem, et sic impetu armatorum absorbit quod ducenta milia fuerunt occisa praefati principis et ipse captus, cui amputato capite regina ipsum in utre sanguine pleno mandavit includi, et sic invective acclamabatur eidem: 'sanguinem sitisti, sanguinem bibe,' quasi ipsa mors ignominiosa quam passus est fuerit argumentum suae atrocitatis.' See also Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, IX.10, ext.1, although he does not cite figures, the peoples involved, or give this quote; M. Junianus Justinus, *Philippian Histories of T. Pompeius Trogus*, I.8; Herodotus, *Persian Wars*, I.205–14. Boccaccio, *Concerning Famous Women*, chap. 47, pp. 104–06, repeats this story, as does Christine de Pizan, *Book of the City of Ladies*, I.17, pp. 42–43, whose changes accentuate women's roles: 'Thamiris' became Queen of the Amazons, who dropped boulders on Cyrus's army and then ambushed those fleeing.

save the ability to concoct fully effective semen. The Fall damaged and deformed the nature of all people, but woman in more ways than man, turning her into the creature often defamed in Aristotle and medieval texts. Like men in freedom-loving regions such as Italy, who could return to the original political virtues, women could in theory regain their manlike original nature. But in Tolomeo's view, the gender roles of women are so central to the correct and harmonious functioning of human life and society that he cannot allow them to pursue, at least in most cases, the occupations and concerns of men.

GOD'S PLAN FOR HISTORY

J. G. A. Pocock recently contrasted the medieval worldview in which, according to him, the Roman Church and Roman Empire always assumed supernatural and metahistorical significance with the modern historical narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Christians, of course, still adhere to such a 'medieval' belief about 'the Church', with many Protestants carefully applying modern typography to distinguish 'Catholic' from 'catholic' in their Creed. Pocock was careful to point to the survival of the medieval outlook into the Renaissance, and even beyond, but he searched in vain for any real expression of the modern view in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. History was the providential working-out of God's plan, in which the two 'major actors' — church and empire — had starring roles, whether or not they were conscious of this or whether or not their actions and motivations were praiseworthy.¹ He specifically included Tolomeo in the company of those trapped within the medieval outlook, and for the most part he is right. Yet, as always Tolomeo's writing reveals profound tensions that result from his attempt to combine disparate elements, principally in this case from the Bible, Augustine, and Aristotle.

Tolomeo's worldview and schema of world history derived from and added some original elements to the two most common medieval metahistorical conceptions of the Roman Empire. He apparently adopted his basic interpretation of history early, since it appears in his earliest work, *De iurisdictione imperii*, and it persists throughout his career. His writings exhibit little evolution in these ideas other than an ever greater insistence on papal hegemony, and this accentuates a

¹ J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, III: *The First Decline and Fall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 71–151.

growing tension between his schema and his more radically evolving political views. His increasing defence of self-government clashed with hierocracy, and since his mature political thought shifted much of the salvational work to the city and its rulers he undercut even the spiritual role of the church and the teleological function of the Roman Empire.

The first of these two medieval conceptions is an interpretation of the Book of Daniel as a prophecy that Rome would be the last of Four World Monarchies collectively and divinely ordained to endure until the Last Days. Jerome and Augustine mentioned this theory, but, although Augustine at times accepted Rome's part in God's plan, he did not deduce from this any special virtue for the empire or place any particular faith in it. Human beings should direct their faith and effort solely to God and use what peace governments of any kind provide to this end. The world with its constant sorrows and cruelties should be of little concern to a Christian, whose true home is elsewhere.²

The second medieval conception is that the Roman Empire or, alternately, the Roman Catholic Church, represents the City of God on earth. Augustine popularized this term, while adamantly denying that Rome, or any secular government, or the earthly church, or any concrete earthly institution could be identified with or represent it, or for that matter, the opposing Earthly City. Although the words 'City of God' were not applied to Rome until after Augustine, the conception itself may be seen in the euphoria over the conversion of Constantine, and especially in the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, one of Tolomeo's sources.³

Both conceptions became common in the early Middle Ages and were eventually combined with the idea of the papal transfer of the seat of the empire in the time of Charlemagne and on several later occasions. Increasingly, they were also combined with hierocratic political thought, in which the Pope claimed authority over the empire and in the selection of the emperor. These concepts were developed in the papal Curia of the eighth and ninth centuries, in the course of the great struggles of church and state in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, and by canon lawyers from the twelfth century on.

Otto von Freising (c. 1114–58), uncle of the emperor Frederick Barbarossa, was an influential twelfth-century writer who propagated one variant of these ideas. He wrote that after the conversion of Constantine the City of God and the City of the Earth were essentially one city, since with few exceptions the emperors

² Augustine, *City of God*, XVIII.22.

³ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, especially Book x.

were good Christians.⁴ Rome would endure until the Last Days, but then would come to represent the forces of evil and be overthrown. At first, he thought the Investiture Controversy initiated an irrevocable schism heralding the end of the world, but a renewed church-state harmony and the resurgence of Roman power under Frederick Barbarossa made him abandon his pessimism for a vision of a new golden age of the City of God, a revival of the Roman Christian Empire as it was under Constantine, Theodosius, Charlemagne, and Henry III.⁵

Scrutinizing contemporary events for confirmation of prophecy and stirring up hopes or fears of the imminent Last Days were practices of which Augustine and the institutional Roman Catholic Church strongly disapproved, though they have proved fascinating to the public ever since. Many millennial writers of the thirteenth century and later wrote of the eschatological role of Rome and some eagerly awaited the coming of the Last World Emperor who would initiate the millennial kingdom. Dominicans, unlike Franciscans, almost never interpreted scriptural events or institutions in this way, though there are some notable exceptions. It is a different mentality, as Pocock understood, merely to see the empire in metahistorical terms, as Tolomeo did, and certainly this viewpoint remained as a backdrop to much later medieval and Renaissance thought. But in his detailed use of metahistorical conceptions, Tolomeo went against the tendency of many scholastic writers of the late thirteenth century, even imperialist ones, who often markedly reduced or secularized their part.

This is one of several points about which I think Pocock was mistaken. Engelbert von Admont (c. 1250–1331), for example, mentions the Four Monarchies, but in an entirely naturalistic and evolutionary setting, saying that each of these empires attained its power through just wars, not a divine plan.⁶ He places the Roman Empire and all other states firmly within a framework of historical change and scoffs at the theory of transfer of empire and the idea that Rome would last until the End, insisting that all temporal things come into existence, evolve,

⁴ Otto von Freising, (Otto Episcopus Frisingensis), *Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. by Adolf Hofmeister, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, 42 (Hannover: Hahn, 1912); English version: *The Two Cities*, trans. by Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), prologue to Book V and passim.

⁵ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, prologue to Book I; *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, trans. by Charles Christopher Mierow (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), prologue to Book I.

⁶ Engelbert von Admont, *Tractatus de ortu, et progressu statu et fine Romani Imperii*, in *Politica imperialia*, ed. by Melchior Goldast (Frankfurt: Bringer, 1614), chap. 10, p. 759.

degenerate, and eventually fail. All kingdoms, he wrote, are unstable over time since human ideas of peace, justice, and power change and human minds have a tendency towards discord, injury, and violence.⁷ In Engelbert we find a remarkable instance of the idea of ‘decline and fall’, for which Pocock found no evidence until the succeeding century, and expressed by a German, not an Italian. The Frenchman Nicole Oresme (c. 1320–82) provides another example. He wrote that we must take the world as it is, and in this world the very idea that a universal monarchy could exist and lead to peace was like a ‘poetic fiction or mathematical fantasy’, or the false prophecy of those who promise the millennium.⁸ I cited these and other examples in a recent article in a volume that Pocock often cited in *Barbarism and Religion*, so it puzzles me why he did not consider them, if only to show how I went wrong.⁹

From my perspective Tolomeo preserved the teleological and metahistorical approach to Rome more than any other non-millennial writer of his time. He accepted the four biblical World Monarchies, but modified the schema to reflect more perfectly his hierocratic beliefs. This is succinctly expressed in *De regimine principum* through an analysis of Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of a mixed-media statue in the Book of Daniel:

The prophet Daniel [...] relates this vision to the Four Monarchies: that of the Assyrians because of the gold head, that of the Medes and the Persians because of the silver arms and breast, that of the Greeks because of the brass belly and thighs, and, finally, that of the Romans because of the iron legs and the feet partially iron and partially clay. ‘But after these’, says the prophet, ‘the God of heaven will raise up a kingdom that will not be dissipated throughout eternity, and his kingdom will not be handed over to another people, and it will crush all kingdoms and will itself stand for eternity’. We say that all of this refers to Christ, and to the Roman Church in his place, if it directs itself to feeding the flock.¹⁰

⁷ Engelbert von Admont, *Tractatus de ortu*, x, 770.

⁸ Nicole Oresme, *Le Livre de politiques d’Aristote*, ed. by Albert Douglas Menut, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, n.s., 60, pt 6 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970), VII.10, pp. 293–94.

⁹ James M. Blythe, ‘“Civic Humanism” and Medieval Political Thought’, in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 30–74 (pp. 45–53). I first developed several of the themes about Tolomeo’s worldview in that article. Pocock did explain his different view on Marsilius of Padua.

¹⁰ *De regimine principum*, III.10.9, with reference to Daniel 2.44: ‘Visionem Daniel propheta [...] ad quattuor monarchias adaptat, Assyriorum videlicet pro aureo capite, Medorum et Persarum pro argenteo in brachiis et pectore, Graecorum vero monarchiam pro aereo ventre et femore,

Other authors also identified the eternal kingdom with the church, but what distinguishes Tolomeo's schema is that this is not merely the Church Triumphant at the end of days, but also the Church Militant now: it is a 'Fifth Monarchy'¹¹ that replaced the Fourth Monarchy of the Roman Empire at the time of Christ, and will last until the Last Judgement and beyond. Notably, Tolomeo thus placed the millennial kingdom not at the end of time but in the age in which we are even now living. The identification of the Christian era with the millennium, though not the elevation of the church as monarchy, ultimately stems from Augustine¹² and the attempt of the institutional church to maintain its authority by discouraging millennial speculation.

In his early work *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo cites more of the biblical texts describing the destruction of the statue and its consequences, then adds his own interpretation:

A stone was cut off without hands from a mountain and struck the statue in the feet and crushed it and it was reduced to embers, which were carried away by the wind, and its place was not to be found. Moreover the stone was made into a great mountain, and it filled up the whole world [...]. By the feet partially of brass, partly of earth, which could not be joined, is signified the schism of lordship, which happened when there were civil wars among the Romans [...]. But the stone cut without hands was Christ born from a virgin without the virile act. Therefore, this stone crushes the whole statue, because all monarchies and all lordships are subject to him, whence in Psalms [8. 8]: 'You have subjected all things under your feet', which word the apostle refers to Christ in Hebrews 2 [8]. But these lordships he devolved on his vicar from the authority committed to him, when he said: 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church' and a little afterward he adds: 'And whatever you bind and release on earth etc'. [Matthew 16. 18, 19], as was established above.¹³

sed Romanorum ultimo pro tibiis ferreis et pedibus partim ferreis partim vero fictilibus. 'sed post haec suscitabit,' ait Propheta, "Deus coeli regnum quod est in aeternum non dissipabitur, et regnum eius populo alteri non tradetur, comminuetque universa regna et ipsum stabit in aeternum," quod totum ad Christum referimus, sed vice eius ad Romanam Ecclesiam si ad pascendum gregem intendat.' Daniel (2.37–45) interprets the dream somewhat in this manner, but does not specify which empires in particular are signified.

¹¹ *De regimine principum*, III.13.1. Tolomeo does not use these exact words in *De iurisdictione ecclesie*.

¹² See, e.g., Augustine, *City of God*, XX.9.

¹³ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, pp. 49–50: 'et abscisus est lapis sine manibus de monte et percussit statuam in pedibus et comminuit eam et redacta est in favillam, que rapitur vento et non est inventus locus eius. Lapis enim factus est mons magnus et implevit universam terram [...]. Sed quod pedes partim de ferro partim de terra, que coniungi non possunt, significat scissuram

By this interpretation Tolomeo shifted the traditional meaning of the prophecy of the stone from an event in Christian history when history itself was approaching its end, and a sign of that end, to the historical revolution of Christ's Incarnation in bringing down the Roman Empire as dominant world monarchy. Since Rome's power hardly decreased around the time of Christ's life, this cannot mean that the civil wars weakened it to the extent that it could be overthrown physically. Nor, despite the impression this passage may give, did Tolomeo likely mean that the Romans acquired their title to empire through their virtue, though he admired them for that, nor lost it because engaging in a destructive and fratricidal civil war made them no longer worthy of empire. Tolomeo would later argue that various peoples lost their freedom because of a decline of virtue or inadequate governance, but never in the context of the transition from one world empire to another. In this early work, Tolomeo consistently asserts that God grants lordship not because someone has any natural right to it, but only because it pleases God. Once again he quotes Daniel in addressing directly the transfer of power to the Romans: 'You should know that he is highest over the kingdom of human beings and gives it to whomever he wants.'¹⁴ Nor does he explain why the centre of World Monarchy shifted in the other cases, though he does imply that the quality of successive secular Monarchies declined, as implied by the metaphor of metals:

[I]n the golden head and neck is understood the Assyrian monarchy on account of its nobility and duration, in the silver breast and arm the monarchy of the Medes and Persians, which was less than the first, in the brass belly and thigh, the Greek monarchy, which on account of its melodiousness and fame is compared to brass sounding, which especially happened in the time of Alexander. But by the iron legs is understood the empire of the Romans.¹⁵

domini, quod quidem accidit, quando fuerunt bella civiles inter Romanos [...] Sed lapis sine manibus abscisus fuit Christus sine virili opere natus de vergine. Hic ergo lapis totam statuum contrivit, quia omnes monarchias et omnia dominia sibi subiecit, unde in Psalmis: 'Omnia subiecisti sub pedibus eius', quod verbum apostolus refert ad Christum Hebr. 2 Hec autem dominia suo vicario derelinquit ex auctoritate ei commissa, cum dixit: 'Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram edificabo ecclesiam meam' et post pauca subdit: 'Et quodcumque ligaveris et solveris super terram' etc., sicut supra est deffinitum.'

¹⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, p. 48, citing Daniel 4.29: 'Scias, quod sit excelsus super regnum hominum et cuicumque voluerit det illud.'

¹⁵ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, pp. 48–49: 'in capite et collo aureo Assiriorum accipitur monarchia propter sui nobilitatem et durationem, in pectore et brachiis argenteis monarchia Medorum et Persarum, que minor fuit quam prima, in ventre et femore ereo monarchia Grecorum, que propter sui sonoritatem et famam comparatur eri sonanti, quod maxime accidit tempore Alexandri. Sed per tibias ferreas accipitur imperium Romanorum.'

Tolomeo introduces the civil wars solely because he needed to point to some aspect of the Roman Empire that could be interpreted as emblematic of its fragmented and weakened nature corresponding to the composite composition of the Fourth Empire in Daniel. Since Christ, as 'true and proper lord of the world',¹⁶ holds all authority by natural right, it would have come to him, and to the pope as his vicar, regardless of the worthiness of the Romans. Nevertheless, it is significant that Tolomeo should seize on this particular event, which he later presents as central to the downfall of political government among the Romans.¹⁷

The use of the term 'vicar of Christ' for the pope was ubiquitous in the Middle Ages. In *De iurisdictione imperii*, Tolomeo analyses the meaning of the word *vicar* in Roman Law and how it applies to the pope:

Concerning the nature of an ordinary vicar, who is constituted through election, which the law states, c. *De officio eius*, he is one who stands in the place of another, because he can do the same thing as the other, in whose place he stands; this is argued at D. 93, c. 1 and *Extra De officio delegati*, c. *Sane*. From this argument therefore it is concluded that, if the pope is the vicar of Christ, which no one would contradict unless raving, since Christ, as was said above and proved with many reasons, has full power over all the humankind, it is manifest that his vicar, namely the highest pontiff, has the same power. And this same thing Constantine confessed by ceding it, as is clear in the constitutions of the Nicene synod, and in D. 96, c. *Constantinus* and c. *Coronam*.¹⁸

Thus, the coming of Christ marked a permanent transfer of universal rule, and hence of empire, to the church, ruled now by the pope as vicar of Christ.

¹⁶ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 26, p. 50.

¹⁷ This does not contradict what I said about his never explaining the fall of a World Monarchy through a decline in virtue. Tolomeo does not connect the change of Rome from a republic to a monarchy with its fall as Fourth Monarchy.

¹⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, pp. 47–48, citing Justinian, *Codex*, 1.50; *Decretum*, D.94, c.1 [not 93] and D.96, c.13, 14 (the Donation of Constantine); and *Decretales*, 1.29, c.11: 'De natura vero vicarii ordinarii, qui per electionem constituitur, quam lex ponit c. De officio eius, que alterius gerit vices, est, quod idem possit quod ille, cuius vices gerit; argumentum ad hoc LXXXXIII di. c. 1. Extra de officio delegati c. Sane. Ex hoc ergo argumento concluditur, quod, si papa est vicarius Christi, quod nullus nisi desipiens contradicit, cum Christus, ut dictum est supra et multis rationibus probatum, plenam habeat potestatem super totum genus humanum, manifestum est eius vicarium, scilicet summum pontificem, eandem potestatem habere. Et hoc idem Constantinus confitetur cedendo, sicut ex constitutionibus Nicene synodi apparet, in c. Decreti di. LXXXXVI, c. Constantinus et c. Coronam.' There is nothing in the decrees of the Nicene Council that supports this. What Tolomeo meant was that Constantine subjected himself to the council's decrees, not surprising since he called it and dominated it.

In the prologue to Book I of *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, Tolomeo elaborates another vision of history and the nature of Christ's power and kingdom that interlocks with the one above and buttresses it. This apparently original theory includes the Five Monarchy theory, but depicts the church as heir not only to the earlier world Monarchies but also to the Kingdom of Israel, making it as it were (though he does not use this terminology) not only a Fifth Monarchy but a 'Second Monarchy' succeeding that of the Jews and expanding it to the whole world. In this way Christ and his vicars became the successors both to the series of secular empires and to the rulers of God's chosen people, whose history had prefigured Christianity and the church. This period is also the Seventh Age of the World, which Augustine described, an age of the fullness of grace in Paul's words, dominated by Christ and his vicar.¹⁹

Tolomeo develops his argument in a lengthy commentary on Genesis 49.10: 'The scepter of Judah will not be taken away, nor the duke from his thigh, until he shall come who is to be sent, and he will be the expectation of the nations [*gentium*].' According to his interpretation, the first two parts of this verse refer to two periods of rulership in Judah: the sceptre to the period of regal kingship from David to the Babylonian Captivity, the duke to the following period when there were no kings, with three exceptions, from Salatiel to Christ. Christ's rule initiated a third period. Since Jesus was from Judah, Tolomeo writes, its lordship, which continues to exist through the church, has lasted longer than any other government, and this is true for both the Judaeen regal and priestly tribes. In the period immediately preceding Christ these two tribes were 'mixed'. Tolomeo introduces this last point so as to be able depict Christ as heir to both lines, giving him and his vicar clear title to primacy as priests and kings.²⁰

The nature of priest-kings was a common theme of hierocratic discourse, and it originated in the enigmatic Melchizedek, 'King of Salem and priest of the Most High God', mentioned in Genesis 14.18–20, who brought out bread and wine for Abraham. Priest-kings were common in the ancient world, and 'Most High God' was doubtless merely the name of some local God, but it would have been easy to misconstrue the reference as being to the God of Israel, who thus seemingly supported a regal and ecclesiastical structure outside ancestry of the Jews, among whom God never permitted the uniting of the two roles. The episode had a deep resonance: Psalm 109.4 refers to the Messiah as 'a priest forever after the order

¹⁹ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, I.1, cols 756–58.

²⁰ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, I.1, cols 753–55.

of Melchizedek', and Paul applied this appellation to Christ and discussed it at length in Hebrews 5–7, where he naturally picked up on the bread and wine as a prefiguration of the Eucharist.²¹

Oddly, Tolomeo never refers to Melchizedek and instead employs an unusual and non-biblical source in support of his conclusion — Josephus's account in *Antiquities of the Jews* of the last three rulers of the Maccabean dynasty — Aristobolus, Alexander Janneus, and Hircanus II. All three assumed the title of king and priest, reversing the post-exilic Jewish tradition of eschewing kings and combining for the first time among the Jews the offices of priest and king in one person. Julius Caesar defeated and captured the last of them, Hircanus, and gave Herod command in Judah. As Tolomeo recounts the events, after Herod executed Hircanus in 30 BCE, in particular at the time of Christ's birth a few years later, both the Jewish regal and priestly powers were extinct, as was predicted in the Genesis passage he is commenting on, and the way was cleared for the more universal lordship of Christ. Citing Aristotle for the expression, Tolomeo adds that Christ's nobility was thus enhanced by the antiquity of his progenitors.²²

Tolomeo further argues that the special nature of Christ's lordship, transcending all others, could be confirmed by two other elements of the Genesis passage. First, Christ was 'the expectation of the nations', whose worship now extended throughout the world, even to places like India and Ethiopia, where Rome never ruled, and to the west, beyond Alexander's empire. Second, the passage implies that his rule will never end (it is at this point that Tolomeo brings in Daniel and the five empires). Though infinite in the future, Christ's rule had passed an important milestone in Tolomeo's own generation: according to Tolomeo it was only in the thirteenth century that its duration had exceeded that of the Assyrian Empire, which lasted, according to Augustine, for 1242 years. It had passed the Roman Empire long before. As World Monarchy, the Roman Empire reigned, according to Tolomeo, for only 752 years: from the foundation of the city to the

²¹ Irrelevantly for this book, the Dominion of Melchizedek, <<http://www.melchizedek.com>> [accessed June 2008], is a modern pseudo-nation that claims lands in the Pacific and Antarctica and whose main activity seems to be massive financial fraud. It considers itself 'an ecclesiastical sovereignty, defined in Holy Writ as a heavenly sent one world government', and has published a new 'translation' of the Bible. 'We believe', their official site states, 'that the New Testament teaches that Jesus' successor will fulfill the prophecies about the coming messianic priest-king. With the Lubavitchers to our right, and the "Jews for Jesus" to our left, we are in the center of this issue.'

²² *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, I.1, cols 753–55; Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, Books XIII–XIV; Aristotle: Tolomeo cites *Rhetoric* but I have not located the reference.

birth of Christ.²³ To avoid confusion, I will normally use 'Roman Empire' to refer to the empire after Christ and some variation of 'Fourth Monarchy of Rome' whenever the context is not clear.

If the period of Roman kings was part of the Fourth Monarchy, as Tolomeo states here, then it existed before the Macedonian Third Monarchy and even the Medean and Persian Second Monarchy. Tolomeo may have been confused about the chronology, but he was also trying to reconcile his schema with that of Augustine, who wrote that the Assyrian and Roman Empires were the primary empires. All others were mere 'appendages' to them, and the Roman Empire began just as the Assyrian fell.²⁴ Tolomeo would understand what existed under the kings as merely the roots of what would much later become a real-world empire. More problematic is his comment on the Roman Empire's end: 'if we want to take it' as just outlined, it lasted 752 years, but 'if you want to extend it to Constantine, who ceded the empire', it still would only have lasted another 330 years for a total of 1082, still far less than the years of Christ's rule. This would not be true if he dated Christ's rule to 330 CE, for then he would have ruled only 985 years at the time Tolomeo wrote.

This comment suggests another case of overlap of World Monarchies, but Tolomeo would never have accepted Christ living in the world and not being its rightful and sole ruler. He knew that the church exercised little real power until the conversion of Constantine, and more significantly his move to Constantinople in 330, so this date was key to the effective domination of the Roman Church. But his switch to the second pronoun most likely signalled that he was not proposing a serious alternative but attempting to convince even those who fixed on the year 330 of the surpassing duration of Christ's lordship.

In *De iurisdictione imperii*, Tolomeo develops visions of the universe, both Aristotelian and Neoplatonic, to defend the earthly hegemony of the vicar of Christ with philosophical reasoning.²⁵ He begins with an analogy derived from the Aristotelian relationship of soul and body, with the body deriving all its virtue and movement from the soul. As the soul uses the body as its instrument, so too, Tolomeo says, does the spiritual the corporal, and in like manner the pope the emperor. In *De regimine principum* he uses the same argument with respect to

²³ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, I.1, cols 755–56. In *De regimine principum*, III.13.1, Tolomeo also says that the Fifth Monarchy had lasted longer, but he does not mention Assyria there or give specific details, so it would not be clear to readers exactly what he meant.

²⁴ Augustine, *City of God*, XVIII.2.

²⁵ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 7, pp. 18–19.

the pope's authority over any temporal power. At this point Tolomeo does not mention his theory developed in *De operibus sex dierum* that the relationship between the human body and soul changed with sin, transforming despotic rule into democratic or political rule.²⁶ On the one hand, this is not significant, because the proper relationship is always despotic, but on the other hand it can explain why the emperor did not always (or even often) recognize his subordinate position: just like the mutinous body, the secular arm struggles against its proper response to the spiritual authority.

Tolomeo also introduces another, similar analogy, and portrays the pope as the head of the mystical body of the faithful, and thus the sole source of its action.²⁷ In *De iurisdictione imperii*, he extends the soul-body analogy, establishing what he would later call a despotic relationship throughout the universe: the angelic substances, superior to that of the heavenly spheres, are responsible for their motion, and, above them, is the Soul of the World, as represented in Plato's *Timaeus* (the only work of Plato directly available in Tolomeo's day), which has a more perfect nature than anything material and determines all motion, spiritual as well as corporal.

We might expect the World Soul to be some aspect of God, and Tolomeo eventually conceded this, but only after reluctantly rejecting, on Augustine's authority, its identification with the pope. He managed to bring the pope back in as World Soul vicar, as it were, because the Soul acts in the world more through the pope's action than through God's. Other church officials in their appropriate ranks represent the various spiritual agencies, such as angels, through whom God effects his will on earth, and thus, 'the ecclesiastical hierarchy suitably and perfectly imitates the celestial'.²⁸ Although Tolomeo does not cite him here, as he does elsewhere, he doubtless derived this hierarchy from pseudo-Dionysius. There is a distinction, however, between the relationship of the pope to the World Soul, which clearly is more than an analogical one, and that of the remaining ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is not.

In *De regimine principum* Tolomeo maintains these basic principles, but puts them into a more Aristotelian political context. His discussion of papal authority comes at the point in which he introduces the various kinds of rule in the world. Like Christ, the pope is both supreme priest and king; for this reason Tolomeo

²⁶ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, pp. 188–89. See above.

²⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.10.7.

²⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 7, pp. 18–19, citing Aristotle, *De anima*, I.3, *Ethics*, VII.9–10, and *Metaphysics*, VIII.9; Augustine, *Super Genesim*, VII.19; Plato, *Timaeus*, I.6.

classifies his rule as sacerdotal and regal lordship. This category combines his variation of an Aristotelian governmental form with a purely religious one, whose meaning was not conclusively determined, but which by this concatenation he meant to fix. He does this both in *De regimine principum* and in *De iurisdictione ecclesiae super regnum Apuliae et Siciliae* through a close analysis of each clause of the Petrine commission: 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'²⁹ The church built upon a rock meant for Tolomeo that all lordship depends upon the pope. Tyrants and persecutors, to which *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* adds schismatics, are what Christ meant by the gates of Hell, and they will all die badly. The keys extend the pope's power both to the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant, and 'whatever' grants him full lordship on earth. *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* states quite explicitly that this authority extends to all rule, not just to imperial, and that although the pope would especially be entitled to intervene if a ruler should sin, this was not a necessary condition.³⁰ Tolomeo's interpretation, in *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, of Innocent III's decretal *Novit* goes beyond Innocent's claim of the right to intervene in a quarrel between the kings of France and England, 'to decide concerning a sin', to insist that Innocent in fact had affirmed the principle that 'when the ruler transgresses against rule, it pertains to the highest pontiff to judge that'.³¹ Though Tolomeo (and Innocent elsewhere in the decretal) uses the word *delinquat*, which has overtones of sin, his reading would allow intervention in any case of abuse of power, whether internal to a government, or, as in this case, in a dispute between governments.

De iurisdictione ecclesiae extends the defence of papal monarchy, explicitly using some arguments taken, and possibly distorted, from Thomas Aquinas's part of *De regimine principum*: the moral superiority of papal to all other lordship, the subordination of the antecedent end of secular government to the final end of eternal life, and the analogy of the pope to the pilot of a ship. It also applies the Aristotelian metaphor of the 'Architectonic' virtues of the rulers to the pope and quotes the strident words of Pope Innocent III's coronation sermon's quotation

²⁹ Matthew 16.18–19; *De regimine principum*, III.10.2–6; *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, pp. 470–71.

³⁰ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 471a.

³¹ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XXI.2, col. 1120: 'Quia ubi princeps delinquit contra principem, ad summum pontificem pertinet istud iudicare.' *Decretales*, II.1.13, *Novit*; 'decernere de peccato'.

of Jeremiah: 'I constitute you over nations and kingdoms, that you may tear up and dissipate, build and plant.'³²

Tolomeo's hierocratic position had not softened at all in the later *De regimine principum*, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, and *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, though in the first he devotes only one chapter to discussing it. There he buttresses papal power by identifying the coercive aspect of his rule with the Aristotelian form of regal monarchy, which by his definition included a government that acts solely through the will of the ruler for the benefit of the ruled. Nevertheless, Tolomeo was careful to make some distinction between the pope's power and that of God's, even on earth. The pope is vicar only within the foundation that God provided for him and cannot modify this, as God could do by, for example, changing the basic organization of the church, saving someone without baptism, or modifying the form and matter of the sacraments.³³ In one way Tolomeo's defence of papal power became more extreme over time. In *De iurisdictione imperii* he was still under the influence of Thomas Aquinas's preference for mixed constitutional monarchy. By *De regimine principum*, his understanding of Aristotle as reflected in his definition of regal government led him to see kingship as inherently authoritarian, and this forced him to abandon his conviction in *De iurisdictione imperii* that papal power was constitutionally limited since the pope and cardinals stood in an analogous relationship to that of the Roman consul and Senate.³⁴

Though Tolomeo was the first writer to incorporate the church as final empire into the scheme from Daniel, this function is in some ways a natural evolution of the combination of papal hierocratic theory with the common, often unstated and perhaps even unconscious identification of the church with the City of God. The only time Tolomeo comes close to a definition of the City of God, he quotes Augustine and identifies it with the Church Triumphant, 'the celestial polity, which is the City of God'.³⁵ He never explicitly identifies the earthly church of today as the City of God, but he does occasionally call the church the 'Kingdom of Christ', and the concept, I think, underlies much of his thought.

According to Gerhart Ladner, Augustine chose the term 'City of God' instead of 'Kingdom of God', even though he often used them interchangeably — which implies that the difference must merely be one of emphasis — because 'the concept

³² *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b.

³³ *De regimine principum*, III.10.10.

³⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31, p. 64. I will discuss this in detail later.

³⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.10.8.

of the *Regnum Dei* has connotations of action, God's action of reigning over heavenly perfection and earthly imperfection; that of the *Civitas Dei* designates a status, the citizenry status of those who are actually or virtually God's people'.³⁶ Since for Augustine government was necessary only because of sin, his elaboration of the nature of the City of God is rarely political but almost always social, communal, and mystical. For Tolomeo, who was interested precisely in rule in the world, but not in citizen participation in this case, the kingdom alternative was more relevant, leaving consideration of cities to his study of rule in earthly communities. The City of God could then be left safely to the heavenly sphere.

Clearly, the world at large did not immediately notice the triumph of the Fifth Monarchy. At the time of Jesus and for the next three hundred years, the church had little power in the world and was sporadically persecuted by the pagan Roman emperors, whose Roman Empire remained the dominant political force. This too was all part of God's plan according to Tolomeo. Eventually, 'the appropriate time came for the Kingdom of Christ [...] to manifest itself to the world', and it then compelled the emperor to concede his subordinate status: 'The force of our ruler Jesus Christ caused distress to Constantine, the ruler of the world, by striking him with leprosy and then curing him, which is beyond the capability of human force. When he had proof of this, Constantine yielded his lordship to the blessed Sylvester, the vicar of Christ, to whom this lordship belonged by right'. The result: 'By this cession a temporal kingdom was appended to the spiritual Kingdom of Christ' and the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled: 'His empire will be multiplied and there will be no end of peace.' From then, with few exceptions the Roman Emperors were Christians, and showed due reverence and obedience to the pope except in periods of conflict. When the relationship worked properly, the Kingdom of Christ reigned supreme as Fifth Empire. When it did not, it was as if world harmony were destroyed by enemies of God.³⁷

Otto von Freising shared Tolomeo's view of the progress of the early church and the Christian nature of the emperors after Constantine 'except a few', but

³⁶ Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 268.

³⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.16–17: 'Opportuno igitur tempore, ut manifestaretur mundo regnum Christi compositum, virtus principis nostri Iesu Christi principem mundi sollicitavit, Constantinum videlicet, percutiens eum lepra, ac ipsum curans supra humanam virtutem. Qua probata, in dominio cessit vicario Christi, beato videlicet Sylvestro, cui de iure debebatur ex causis et rationibus superius assignatis: in qua quidem cessione spirituali Christi regno adiunctum est temporale [...]. Tunc adimpletum est quod post illam clausulam scribitur in Is.: multiplicabitur eius imperium et pacis non erit finis.'

draws from these quite different conclusions about governance. Otto, like Augustine, treats the two cities before Christ as the mystical communities of believers and non-believers, but unlike Augustine, endows the church in that period with a purely mystical existence. Afterward, and again unlike Augustine, he minimizes without eliminating the mystical nature of the cities and normally calls all those who outwardly professed Christianity members of the City of God, regardless of their ultimate destiny after the Last Judgement. Similarly, he usually reduces the Earthly City to those people, marginal and few in his limited understanding of the world, who rejected Christ. For Otto, most of the world had been converted, and of those who had not, 'hardly anything done by these unbelievers is found to be worthy of record or to be handed on to posterity'.³⁸ Since he saw the City of God, at least at times, as a concrete entity existing in a clearly identifiable form on earth, the possibility existed for it to be incorporated in some political institution, an impossibility for Augustine, to whom the cities were always and essentially mystical. For these reasons, Otto is able to write:

But from that time [of the Emperor Theodosius I, who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire] on, since not only all the people, but also the emperors (except a few) were orthodox Catholics, I seem to myself to have composed a history not of two cities but virtually of one only, which I call the Church. For although the elect and reprobate are in one household, yet I cannot call these cities two, as I did above; I must properly call them but one — mixed however, as the grain is mixed with the chaff.³⁹

The reason that he could refer to the one city after Theodosius is not that the two cities had become fused, but that, except for a few heathens, Jews, and heretics, the earthly city had withered, and for all practical purposes disappeared. It was the City of God itself that was mixed, joining the saved and the damned in one faith, under the leadership of the Christian emperor. It is not that the empire was the City of God, but that as Fourth and Last Monarchy it was the optimal, or at least the divinely ordained, agent for its governance in the time after Christ, though it could, and often did, fail in its purpose. When he writes that history after Theodosius is 'almost' the history of one city, he inserts the qualification not to imply that his terminology was metaphorical or approximate, but only to acknowledge

³⁸ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, prologue to Book V, p. 324 (English), p. 228 (Latin).

³⁹ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, prologue to Book V, pp. 323–24 (English), p. 228 (Latin): 'At deincipis, quia omnia non solum populus, sed et principes exceptis paucis, katholoci fuere, videor mihi non de duabus civitatibus, sed pene de una tantum, quam ecclesiam dico, hystoriam texuisse. Non enim, quamvis electi et reprobi in una sint domo, has civitates, ut supra, duas dixerim, sed proprie unam, sed permixtam tamquam grana cum paleis.'

the few heretical or excommunicated emperors and others, who through that status separated themselves from the City of God, embodying a minor and anachronistic recrudescence of the Earthly City.

In this passage Otto misappropriates a number of Augustinian ideas and phrases through his preconception of the identity of the City of God, the Church, and the Kingdom of God, as he explicitly states elsewhere: 'The City of Christ, or the Kingdom of Christ with reference to its present or future status is called the Church.'⁴⁰ This means that for him Augustine's statement that the church on earth includes both wheat and chaff meant that the City of God does. And it forced him to repudiate as meaningless Augustine's treatment of the church as a composite of the City of God and the Earthly City. Much of Otto's incomprehension of Augustine stemmed from his unitary view of society. This dominant worldview identified all Christendom, including its spiritual and secular aspects, as the church. Bemoaning the current state of affairs in which the authority of the Roman Church was in Otto's view eclipsing that of the state, he formulated this view using language similar to that which can be found in many legal and political texts from the eleventh century on: 'Let no one because of these words suppose from this that we separate the Christian Empire from the Church, for there are known to be two personas in the church of God — the sacerdotal and the royal.'⁴¹ The empire was not an institution separate from the church but an essential part of it.

Pocock focuses on Otto's essential pessimism about the world and the miseries that seemed to be an invariable consequence of government. Despite the empire's function in the sequence of Monarchies and its eschatological role, he insists that Otto recognized no special significance to its actions, which remained 'as trivial and miserable' as before.⁴² All this is correct, but perhaps these perceptions contributed to Pocock's error of continuing to see the empire as the Earthly City in Otto's narrative. One of Augustine's arguments had been that comprehending the meaninglessness of the affairs of the Earthly City was one way to see that we should spurn earthly for heavenly things, and Otto wrote many similar things

⁴⁰ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, prologue to Book VIII, p. 453 (English), p. 390 (Latin): 'Civitas Christi seu regnum eius secundum presentem statum vel futurum ecclesia dicatur.'

⁴¹ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, prologue to Book VII, p. 404 (English), p. 309 (Latin): 'Nemo autem propter haec verba nos Christianum imperium ab ecclesia separare putet, cum duae in ecclesia Dei personae, sacerdotalis et regalis, esse noscantur.' I have slightly altered the Mierow translation.

⁴² Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 109.

himself. But the ontological nature of earthly government, if not its usual futility, changed in the Christian era. Pocock cites the passage I just quoted about there being really only one city now as well as Otto's suggestion 'that the earthly city persists only where there are Jews and other actual unbelievers'.⁴³ His reluctance to abandon the Earthly City in light of this can only be explained, I think, by his omission of the role of the unitary theory and thus his conviction that Otto identified the Heavenly City with the institutional Roman Church alone⁴⁴ and, consequently, had the need to relegate the empire to its Augustinian function. It is easy to miss this theory, since medieval writers and Otto in particular were wildly inconsistent in their use of the word *church*, and Otto himself used it in several different senses, including the clerical hierarchy.

While the quotidian affairs of the empire may have had no eternal significance for Otto, it still had its eschatological role to play as last World Monarchy, and he thought it possible that we might be able to discern the coming end through observation of particular events in which the empire takes part. Otto's unitary preconception led him to deduce that it was the loss of the proper balance between the two powers in the church — pope and emperor — that would herald the Last Age of the world. As Pocock has demonstrated, Otto, as would be expected from a member of the imperial family, had grave doubts about papal pretensions to secular authority, including that vested in the pope by the Donation of Constantine. Yet it was only in the Investiture Controversy that Otto perceived a significant qualitative reversal of the proper roles, in Gregory VII's excommunication of Henry IV and his failure to show due reverence to him, both of which apparently signified his pretensions to direct secular rule. For Otto, Gregory's acts signalled the approach of the end, and he identifies them with the Danielic 'stone cut off without hands' that smashed the composite feet of the statue and brought it to ruin. With the resurgence of imperial power with Frederick I he changed his mind, and he moved the fall of the last emperor and the possible emergence of the Roman emperor as the Beast of the Apocalypse to a future age.⁴⁵

There are quite a few similarities between the views of Tolomeo and Otto. Tolomeo also accepted a version of the unitary view of society, at least in his early

⁴³ Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 112.

⁴⁴ Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 105.

⁴⁵ Otto von Freising, *The Two Cities*, VI.36, pp. 400–01 (English), pp. 305–06 (Latin); prologue to Book III, p. 222 (English), p. 134 (Latin); VIII.3, p. 459 (English), pp. 396–97 (Latin); *Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, prologue.

work, and in addressing the role of the Roman Empire he uses words similar to Otto's to express it: 'Although there are distinct offices in the church, nevertheless they depend on the pope just as acts of the body on acts of the soul or just as corporal things on spiritual.'⁴⁶ Tolomeo also describes the emergence of the church from obscurity to world domination in the fourth century; he saw the fusion of secular and religious power in support of Christianity from then on as some sort of manifestation of the Kingdom of God that would result in the Roman Empire's submission to the power of the church.

Unlike Otto, Tolomeo thought that the Roman Empire had already succumbed to the Fifth Monarchy. Like Augustine, Tolomeo believed that the millennium of the book of Revelation was not a future manifestation of supernatural powers, but the age in which we have all lived since the first Incarnation of Christ. For him, though not for Augustine, this meant that the Kingdom of Christ in the full spiritual and temporal meaning of the words existed in concrete form in his own time, and that Christ's vicar of necessity would rule this kingdom. In his conception, the Roman Empire was reduced to a service role as the secular arm of the Christian Empire of the church. This is one reason Tolomeo was so concerned in many of his writings to define the precise relationship between the empire and the church. Tolomeo never abandoned his overarching framework, even when his focus shifted, as it did in *De regimine principum* and *Annales*, to the role of non-universal government. In these later works he wrote with much greater sophistication about political issues than he did in *De iurisdictione imperii*, and he seemed much more interested in such issues. Because so much of what he wrote there seems completely naturalistic and concerned with purely earthly political problems and solutions, and is more in line with current concerns, we are tempted to forget that his theories were built on or somehow coexisted with an eschatological foundation.

Compared to his later writings, Tolomeo's long 'digression' on the nature of lordship in *De iurisdictione imperii* exhibits only a rudimentary understanding of Aristotelian principles, but the ideas developed there formed the core of the political thought in *De regimine principum*. His motivation in composing this section of the earlier work was not primarily to propose a general theory of government, but was in order to develop the necessary theoretical framework to refute the argument that because the empire predated the church, the rule of the latter depends on or is subordinate to the former. It was immediately after this digression that Tolomeo inserted the interpretation of Daniel described above.

⁴⁶ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 16, p. 34.

By the time he came to write *De regimine principum* what was once peripheral had moved to the centre because of the events in northern Italy in the late thirteenth century, his own experience there, and his study of Aristotle. But his general world outlook remained the same. His new interest in city politics likely stemmed from the years of the intervening period spent as brother and prior in the Dominican houses of Lucca and Florence, when he was much more connected to city government and its milieu than at any time since his youth. The general success of the papacy in keeping the empire under control in the late thirteenth century made the struggle of the two great institutions less immediately important. He did write at a time of a renewed church-state struggle — this time between the Pope and the French king — but his possibly problematic relationship with Boniface VIII may have contributed to his decision to concentrate on other matters. Tolomeo defended Boniface's legitimacy and doubtless applauded his hierocratic stance, but he regretted his conflict with France, which repudiated the French-papal alliance he had long favoured, and was disappointed by his supplantation, however justified, of Pope Celestine V, whose sanctity he had found refreshing.

Despite Tolomeo's eschatological foundation, he based relatively few arguments on it in the three treatises that directly address the papal/imperial conflicts — *De iurisdictione imperii*, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, and *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii*. Instead, the preponderance of his argumentation derived from concrete analysis of actual historical events and their meanings. Conversely, we must also realize that when he came to address the purpose of government in general, he doubtless understood his position, even when he did not mention it, in the context of his universal view of history. Everywhere we look in Tolomeo's writings we find the same uncomfortable mix of the Bible, Aristotle, and Augustine and the same indecisiveness as to whether it is desirable to pursue earthly goals and to what extent good government is possible. The gradual evolution of his Aristotelian perspective only made the conflict more intractable.

In his sole citation of Aristotle's *Ethics* in *De iurisdictione imperii*, Tolomeo considers the ends of community:

Therefore it is said properly [...] 'Moreover, my kingdom is not here', that is, it is not like an earthly kingdom [...] which is sought by the worldly as the principal end [...] and the philosopher says in the *Ethics* that political felicity consists of this, to which he disposes other civil political virtues. But the faithful of Christ on account of this strive with virtues and send themselves forth with most fruitful labours to follow the Kingdom of Heaven, in which true and not false happiness consists.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 18, pp. 57–58: 'Ideo proprie loquitur [...] "Nunc autem regnum meum non est hinc," id est sicut regnum terrenum [...] quod a mundanis queritur, quasi

This passage presents a clear Augustinian dichotomy between Christian and governmental goals. Political order is beneficial, but secondary, and not necessary for the only important goal, salvation. The goals are at best complementary, not directly related. Political activity cannot lead to true happiness. Aristotle also argues for happiness correctly understood as the ultimate human goal and identified two approaches to it, but for him politics and happiness were more intimately related. In the *Ethics* he distinguishes between contemplative and practical activities and in principle finds the former more worthy.⁴⁸ A key difference with Tolomeo is that Aristotle taught that contemplation alone could not lead to happiness, since the virtue needed for it could only be developed in the context of a polity, participation in which thus becomes a necessity for perfect happiness.⁴⁹ And for him both the contemplative and active life required the same virtues. In *De iurisdictione imperii*, Tolomeo makes politics and contemplation separate social activities directed to different ends. Beyond this he subordinates one goal to the other, which necessarily resulted in the subordination of political authority to the pope, who assured the primary goal of salvation. It would be hard for a medieval author to avoid this conclusion, except, as Dante, for example, did, by positing that religion and politics have completely separate goals, independently worthy and achievable.⁵⁰ By this argument one did not have to subordinate one goal to another, even if one were inherently more important and worthwhile.

In a late work, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae super regnum Apuliae et Siciliae*, Tolomeo connects the two ends, directly citing a passage from Aquinas:

Brother Thomas in his treatise *De regimine principum* [proved] that the priesthood of Christ and consequently his vicar is preferred from his commission to all lordship, because this is greatest in moral philosophy. The principle of that art, to which pertains the ultimate end, is always to command in operations those things which are ordained to that ultimate end.⁵¹

finis potissimus [...] et philosophus in *Ethics* in hoc felicitatem politicam dicit consistere, ad quam ceteras virtutes politicas civiles disponit. Sed Christi fideles propter hoc virtutibus intendunt et fructuosos se laboribus exponunt, ut regnum celorum consequantur, in quo vera et non falsa beatitudo consistit, quam phylosophi ponebant.' The reference is to Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1.9.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Ethics*, x.7; see also 1.5. Aristotle also mentions the pursuit of physical pleasure, the life of money making, and honour as possible paths to happiness, but he discounts them at once.

⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Ethics*, x.9

⁵⁰ Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia* (bilingual edition), ed. and trans. by Prue Shaw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), III.16, pp. 145–49.

⁵¹ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b: 'Frater Thomas in tractatu *De regimine principum*, ad probandum quod Sacerdotium Christi, et per consequens sui Vicarii ex sua commissione

Hierocracy flows naturally from this perspective,⁵² and Tolomeo immediately follows the passage with another reference to the *Ethics* (the only citation of either the *Ethics* or *Politics* in this treatise) in defence of papal hegemony:

The ultimate end of the Christian people is eternal life [...]. It pertains to the pontifical priesthood to lead to that end; therefore it will be his singularly to command in providing and in exercising governance, and in disposing those things which are necessary to that end, and similarly in removing impediments to following that end. Which art Aristotle in *Ethics* calls architectonic among the political virtues.⁵³

Although Tolomeo radically distorts Aristotle's position, it was a natural misunderstanding for a medieval reader. Like Tolomeo, but unlike Dante, Aristotle did write of a single end and the subordination of all other ends to happiness. He argued that it is political science that directs us to it. How else could a medieval Christian interpret this than that political science aims at salvation, and as such its application must be under the ultimate direction of the church? The important point is that Tolomeo subtly modified his earlier view: now there is a single end, with the pope coordinating the secular and ecclesiastical steps toward it. Such a perspective provides one more justification for the hierocratic worldview, and a second instance of a stiffening of Tolomeo's hierocratic stance after *De iurisdictione imperii*. Concomitantly, his acceptance of a unified end accentuates his difficulties with consistency.

praefertur omni dominio, quia haec est maxima in philosophia morali. Principium semper illius artis, ad quem pertinet ultimus finis, est imperare operantibus, ea quae ordinantur ad istum ultimum finem.' This refers to Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.15.8–10: 'Sic enim ei, ad quem finis ultimi cura pertinet, subdi debent illi, ad quos pertinent cura antecedentium finium, et eius imperio dirigi.' Just before this, Thomas cites Aristotle, *Ethics*, I.1.1094a.10–15, on the highest end.

⁵² However, Jürgen Miethke, 'Politische Theorie in der Krise der Zeit: Aspekte der Aristotelesrezeption in früheren 14. Jahrhundert', in *Institutionem und Geschichte: Theoretische Aspekte und mittelalterliche Befunde*, ed. by Gert Melville, Norm und Structure, 1 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 157–86 (p.165), argues that Aquinas's students could derive either hierocracy or dualism from this passage.

⁵³ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b: 'Finis autem ultimus Christiani Populi est vita aeterna [...]. Ad istum autem finem deducere ad Pontificale sacerdotium pertinet; ergo eius erit singulariter imperare in providendo, et in gubernando, ac disponendo ea, quae sunt necessaria ad praedictum finem, et similiter impedimenta removendo ad memoratum consequendam finem. Quam artem Philosophus ab Ethicis in virtutibus politicis Architectonicam vocat.' Aristotle, *Ethics*, I.2.1094a, discusses the supreme end, and says that political science, whose practice pertains to this end, was the most architectonic science. At I.7 he says that happiness is the supreme end to which all should be subordinated and at I.4. that political science aims at the highest of all goods achievable by action.

De regimine principum goes furthest in assimilating political virtues and ends to theological ones, most clearly in sections analogous to the ones in *De iurisdictione imperii* in which Tolomeo derives all lordship from God. In the later work, however, the effect was to shift much of the responsibility for the ultimate end to the secular power. Whereas earlier Tolomeo had cited Augustine as his principal authority and restricted the ruler to the important but subordinate roles of correction and setting an example, he now uses Aristotle extensively and elevates the status of government:

In government the legislator should always intend that the citizens be directed to live according to virtue. Indeed, this is the end of the legislator, as Aristotle says in *Ethics*, Book II [...]. We cannot come to this end without divine motion [...]. An end sets the efficient cause in motion, and we find that it is a more noble and better end to the degree that it is more effective [...] as Aristotle says in *Politics*, Book I. The end which a king should principally intend for himself and his subjects is eternal happiness, which consists of the vision of God. Because that vision is the most perfect good, it ought to set the king and any lord in motion, so that the subjects should follow that end, since one governs best by intending such an end.⁵⁴

It is striking that Tolomeo portrays secular government as not only helpful but central, perhaps even necessary, for salvation, and that this is now its primary end, not earthly peace or the earthly common good — as it was for most of his contemporary theorists — or even happiness. He does not construe civic virtue as something different in any way from religious virtue, still less opposed to it. It is of the same nature, and, though inferior to it, a necessary prerequisite. This virtue could even be realized by pagans, as his praise for the Roman Republic proved. From this standpoint, politics could be seen as a step toward the City of God. The late fifteenth-century Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola came to the same conclusion.

⁵⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.3.3–4: ‘in regimine legislator semper debet intendere ut cives dirigantur ad vivendum secundum virtutem, immo hic est finis legislatoris, ut Philosophus dicit in 2 Ethicorum [...]. Sed ad istum finem venire non possumus sine motione divina [...]. Finis movet efficientem et tanto efficacius quanto finis nobilior et melior reperitur [...] sicut Philosophus dicit in 1 Politicorum. Finis autem quem principaliter rex intendere debet in se ipso et in subditis est aeterna beatitudo, quae in visione Dei consistit. Et quia illa visio est perfectissimum bonum, maxime debet movere regem et quemcumque dominum ut istum finem subditi consequantur: quia tunc optime regit, si talis in ipso sit finis intentus’ (in the Matthis edition the last sentence is ‘Et quia iste visio [...] et quemcumque dominum ut hunc’). The citations are to Aristotle, *Ethics*, II.1.1103b.3–6 (See also *Politics*, III.9.1280b.5–11); *Politics*, I.1–2.1252a.10–53a.40, especially 1252b.35–53a.1 and 1252a.1–6.

As the centrality of the secular ruler — whether emperor, king, or city rector — grew in Tolomeo's thought the unitary theory of society diminished. Such a result is not a necessary consequence of his changed outlook, since imperialists could even more easily argue for a vastly expanded role for the emperor in the economy of salvation. But as Tolomeo's focus changed to the city, so too did the importance of the emperor diminish. In the few sections of *De regimine principum* devoted to papal power, Tolomeo restates many of the classic examples of popes deposing emperors and chose not to privilege the empire, but rather to attribute the incidents to a perversion of the proper purpose of 'their power, or that of any other lordship',⁵⁵ putting all governments on the same level. In the few sections on imperial power, the emperor's office became simply an instance of mixture of regal and political power.⁵⁶ In the next chapter I will consider the consequence of this change in Tolomeo's treatment of empire for Pocock's thesis.

In another passage of *De regimine principum* Tolomeo follows up a citation of the *Ethics* passage cited in *De iurisdictione imperii* about the ordination of the political virtues to political felicity with a different application of the architect analogy mentioned in *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, applied now to city officials: 'For the virtue by which a political rector exercises governance over a city is the architect of all other virtues of the citizens.'⁵⁷ Although the pope remained supreme arbiter, comparable to the architect of *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, the civic rector became in a sense his vicar for both goals in ordinary times, not simply one responsible for temporalities. It is implicit that not only does the definition of many necessary virtues require community, but they can only develop within society.⁵⁸ Since Tolomeo taught that certain peoples could have good rule only if they govern themselves, and that this was the only good form of government simply speaking, the formula of papal supremacy threatened to become divorced from practical application, like that of 'all power is from God'. This was the new problem for Tolomeo of which I spoke earlier.

⁵⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.10.7.

⁵⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.12.

⁵⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.23.1: 'Virtus enim qua rector politicus civitatem gubernat architecta est respectu cuiuslibet aliarum virtutum quae sunt in civibus.'

⁵⁸ See Blythe, "Civic Humanism", p. 61.

EMPIRE AND PAPACY

The proper relationship of papacy and empire and its historical development are two of the most common themes of Tolomeo's writing and the specific subject of three of his treatises: *De iurisdictione imperii*, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae super regnum Apuliae et Siciliae*, and *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii*. Of all his works, only *De operibus sex dierum* has nothing directly to say about the relationship. Tolomeo's narrative of imperial history introduces some novel elements, but for the most part it fits comfortably into the papalist literature of this subject from the Investiture Controversy onward. J. G. A. Pocock recently argued that two of the familiar themes of this literature — the translation of the empire, whereby the Pope transferred the seat of the Roman Empire to various locales and the Donation of Constantine, whereby Constantine turned over rule in the Western Empire to the Pope — epitomize the divide between medieval and modern historical thinking:

The discourse of *translatio imperii* and the Donation of Constantine was metahistorical, that is to say, both church and empire were considered as sacred entities transcending time and circumstance, modes of divine action upon, rather than in, secular history. It followed that the great debates over the relative primacy of church and empire, and the extent to which the church's spiritual authority was itself an exercise of empire, were considered in metahistorical terms [...] in which we may discern the outlines of a philosophy of history but which did not oblige the disputants to recognize that they were constructing any such thing. We have come to call the history of these debates 'the history of medieval political thought'.¹

Pocock devoted a major part of his book to a proof that the medieval notions precluded a narrative of decline and fall of the Roman Empire or a historical

¹ Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 128.

critique of empire. Insofar as the empire served an eternal metahistorical role this conclusion would reasonably follow. Defenders of the Pope's right to translate the empire or of the Donation normally based themselves upon a metahistorical view of the church, although they sometimes argued on purely legalistic grounds. But only those who accepted something like the theory of Four World Monarchies would necessarily endorse a metahistorical view of the empire. Brunetto Latini (c. 1220–94), for example, who accepts both the translation and Donation in his *Tresor*, speculated that the Roman Empire may not have been eternal and may in fact have ended with the downfall of the Hohenstaufen. Pocock himself cites this example, but only in a separate argument, which occurs much later in his book, about the lack of medieval critique of the early emperors, so he did not evaluate it in terms of his previous claim.² In the case of Tolomeo, his belief that the empire's role as Fourth Monarchy had ended with the birth of Christ and the subsequent hegemony of a Fifth Monarchy at least made possible a historical treatment of the contemporary Roman Empire.

In the three treatises that Tolomeo wrote specifically on the empire, translation and Donation occupy a central position. His analysis stems both from his overall theory of the Fifth Monarchy and from his interpretation of the historical role of the Roman Empire. The Donation had a dual meaning that corresponded to these two approaches. On the one hand, it was merely the Emperor's acknowledgment of the God-given primacy of the pope and not a grant of power per se, which the pope already possessed by right as vicar of Christ. He exercised the same primacy by right over any other political entity, but he had a special relationship with the empire, because of the latter's historical role in serving the Fifth Monarchy. On the other hand, the Donation created a particular feudal right of the pope to administer the provinces of the Western Empire, supplementary to but conceptually independent of his authority as vicar of Christ.

Whereas Tolomeo's overall worldview that I described in the last chapter remained essentially unchanged in all his writings, the same cannot be said about his position on the empire and its relationship with the papacy. This means that I cannot simply state Tolomeo's 'theory' about church and empire, and we will need a more nuanced account. While there are many similarities in his various treatments of the issue, there are four significant differences. The first three reflect Tolomeo's intellectual development between *De iurisdictione imperii* and his other, later works. The former contains his lengthiest and most closely argued writing on this topic, but it betrays signs of its early composition. First, it does not

² Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, pp. 140–41.

apply the Aristotelian concept of the common good to these issues, as the later works did. Second, it employs the earlier conception of ends discussed above. Third, it reveals a different understanding of the nature of imperial and papal government. The fourth difference derives from the practice of *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum* to argue primarily from the hierocratic authority of the pope, whereas the other works are most concerned with the feudal and legal aspects of the governments.

The first three differences manifest themselves in the details of Tolomeo's analysis of the relationship of church and empire, in particular with respect to the translation of empire theory and the Donation of Constantine. However, in none of his works does Tolomeo argue for the necessary continuity of the Roman Empire throughout the Fifth Monarchy or distinguish the current empire qualitatively from other political entities in either its responsibilities or ends. All that could be said was that as long as it persisted it had the duty of serving the church, that as a particularly extensive monarchy with pretensions to and a past history of universality it had this duty in higher measure than any other government, and that its origins and development placed it in a different, closer relationship with the church than other states had. Nowhere does Tolomeo maintain that the current empire was even theoretically universal or that it properly should or in the future would incorporate other European monarchies like France or England. There is no doubt, however, that despite this theoretical equivalence the empire continued to have a resonance in Tolomeo's mind and writings that separated it from the other governments of the world, and he occasionally does leave the impression, without ever stating it explicitly, that it was a permanent fixture within the Fifth Monarchy and was special in some way.

Pocock maintained that there was little or no narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in Tolomeo's writings. I have never claimed otherwise. He thought that I did because he did not clearly distinguish that narrative from a narrative of the decline and fall of the Roman Republic, which I do believe was a notable and original feature of *De regimine principum*, and which I will discuss in a later chapter. Pocock writes: 'It is worth asking whether the Guelphic combination of papalism with republicanism — Gibbon's "banner of liberty and the church" — led to a more critical view of the Caesars, or beyond it to a vision of Decline and Fall.' He then goes on to mention the favourable view of Roman virtue and republicanism in various authors from 'Virgil to Dante and Ptolemy of Lucca', but he says that he was unable to find any critical medieval approaches to the empire 'in which the emperors display the same weaknesses as the kings,

and the empire is lost with the republican virtue that achieved it'.³ It is true that Tolomeo never developed these ideas, after initially insisting in *De regimine principum* that the empire represented a despotic rule. He did not envision a necessary process of progressive decline in any regime: individual rulers could be good or bad, but this did not affect the ultimate character of the government. While this belief separates him from later writers like Machiavelli, the difference has nothing to do with metahistorical preconceptions.

Tolomeo was also concerned with the protective role of the empire with respect to the church and so preferred to write about ways to control the empire rather than attack it. This attitude may mean that he did not ultimately have the courage of his conviction that monarchical government was always oppressive, and did not share the vision of later republican thinkers, but it does not negate his contribution to republican theory. The essence of my portrayal of Tolomeo is not that he was a Renaissance or modern thinker, but that he, more than any one of his time, saw the potential for certain modes of thought that would later become central, while still in many ways, as was inevitable, preserving a medieval mentality.

I have argued that Tolomeo rejected the metahistorical character of the Christian Roman Empire and the common thesis that it was destined to last until the end of the age. Pocock, in contrast, imputes precisely these two preconceptions to Tolomeo and all of his contemporaries. Although he is normally careful to quote the original language of key texts, Pocock chose in this case to rely on a careless translation. That I am the guilty translator is embarrassing, but it is also amusing, since in order to refute him I must attack myself. When I read in Pocock that Tolomeo had written about the Roman Empire, 'as long as it lasts, so long will last the Roman Church, which has the supreme rank in rule', I began to wonder if he may have been right (or more likely that Tolomeo was once more contradicting himself), but when I checked the text I was relieved and dismayed to see that I had imposed an understood verb on the second parallel clause of the passage when its actual verb came later. Since I had not then thought carefully about Tolomeo's view on the empire my incorrect translation did not strike me as wrong. What the passage really said was more like: 'It will last as long as the Roman Church, which holds the supreme rank in rule, judges it expedient for the faithful of Christ.'⁴

³ Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 139.

⁴ Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 143, citing *De regimine principum*, III.19.1: 'Tantum durabit, quantum Romana Ecclesia, quae supremum gradum in principatu tenet, Christi fidelibus expediens iudicaverit.'

Construed in this way the passage is a testament to the church's role in ordaining Christendom to serve the common good of Christians. The empire's continued existence was totally dependent on the church's determination that its support was still valuable to this end.

The fourth difference in Tolomeo's treatment of the empire in his various works is more a matter of emphasis than substance. Tolomeo wrote the two late treatises on the empire to address particular, practical questions and thereby influence current controversies: what rights the church had in Apulia and Sicily in the case of *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* and what the papal role should be in an imperial election during a vacancy in the empire in the case of *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii*. In such situations the author doubtless felt that it would be more effective to argue from precedent than to insist on the strong hierocratic stance that had recently proved so non-productive for Boniface VIII.

De iurisdictione ecclesiae does also assert the pope's inherent power as vicar of Christ, but arguments from historical precedent and legal rights predominate in it. In Title 4 Tolomeo combines the two justifications. He implicitly refers back to a principle enunciated in the Donation of Constantine that it was not right for the emperor to rule where the pope held court, and asserts that the pope reasonably ordained that the emperor should have no rights in the regions surrounding Rome to avoid the otherwise inevitable conflicts between emperor and pope. Though Sicily and Apulia are not near Rome, one could only get to them by land through the papal territories, he writes, so again the only way to avoid conflicts would be for them to be directly subject to the pope. In documentation of early imperial acquiescence to this arrangement Tolomeo cites a letter that he claims to have seen himself from Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, which divided papal and imperial lands.⁵

The other titles of *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* are purely historical, going as far back in history as the time of the Punic Wars when Sicily, Naples, and Apulia became direct possessions of the Roman Empire and later, by Constantine's grant, direct possessions of the church. According to Tolomeo, Constantine dedicated Sicily and Sardinia in particular to the church out of reverence for his mother, and just as he had forbidden future emperors from entering Rome, he barred them from all the church's patrimony.⁶ Title 2 claims that Charlemagne renewed these

⁵ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, pp. 472a–b. Tolomeo points to this document also in ti. 1, p. 468b.

⁶ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 1, pp. 468a–b.

privileges when he recaptured Sicily and Apulia and returned them to the church, as revealed by an epitaph in a Roman church he built: 'Here lies N, a prince of Charlemagne, killed in Sicily when Charles took it and Apulia from the Saracens and gave them to the church.'⁷ Finally, Title 3 goes into great detail about events in southern Italy and Sicily from the Norman conquest of Robert Guiscard and his subjection to the Pope, to the Hohenstaufen dynastic struggles and Frederick II's deposition by the Pope for, among other things, not paying the toll tax for the papal fief of Sicily, to Charles of Anjou's oath as vassal to the Pope for Sicily and Apulia.⁸

Most of these historical precedents are invoked to demonstrate that these regions had traditionally fallen under the direct administration of the pope. The Punic War example, however, has nothing to do with this, but rather with the close relationship between these lands and ancient Rome. In *De origine ac translatione*, Tolomeo quotes once again the familiar passage of the Donation of Constantine about how Constantine 'freely disposing, conceded Rome and all Italy and all western kingdoms with imperial dignities to the blessed Sylvester, then Roman pontiff, and to his successors'.⁹ Although it was a central part of the west, Italy received a specific mention. In all his writings Tolomeo shows that he regarded the ancient Diocese of Italy as occupying a unique position as the homeland of ancient Rome and the seat of the papacy. It had a different relationship to Rome from that of all other of the vast territories of the ancient empire, and this was only ratified and solidified by the coming of the popes and the various donations and oaths of the princes who controlled it at various times.

De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii, while having a more general title, is the shortest of the three treatises on empire and the one that is most limited in its theoretical underpinnings, restricting its argument almost exclusively to historical precedent. There is almost nothing in it, except perhaps the rather conventional closing sentences, which urge obedience to the pope, that could be construed as an argument based on the inherent authority of the pope. It does not reject the hierocratic argument; it simply does not bring it up. Nor does *De regimine principum*, despite its emphasis on hierocratic power, reject the

⁷ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 2, p. 468b: 'Hic jacet N. princeps Caroli Magni, qui mortuus fuit in Sicilia, quando dictus Carolus cepit eam a Saracenis, et Apuliam, et donavit Ecclesiae.'

⁸ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 3, pp. 469a–70b.

⁹ *De origine ac translatione*, p. 67: 'Romam et totam Italiam ac omni occidentalia regna cum omnibus dignitatibus imperialibus beato Silvestro, Romano tunc pontifici, eius successoribus libere disponendo concessit.'

argument from feudal precedent. Tolomeo may simply have thought that it would be distracting in a treatise on the general theory of government to get bogged down in a discussion of particular feudal rights of the pope or any other ruler. *De regimine principum* does not discuss the relationship of the church and empire very much at all other than to define the overall regal and sacerdotal power of the pope and to give examples of emperors obeying popes.

De iurisdictione imperii was also written in reaction to a particular situation in order to answer the question of when the emperor got the right to administer his empire. Unlike the other two, its entire argument derives from hierocratic principles. Partly this was a developmental issue; partly it reflected the stronger position of the papacy around 1280 when Tolomeo wrote the work. At that time Tolomeo had not yet developed his ideas about the feudal consequences of the Donation. When he had, a few decades later, he mentioned them or not as his particular purpose required, much as he did with arguments from canon law or Aristotle.

Whatever privileged position the Roman Empire held in Tolomeo's works rested on the earlier function of its predecessor, the Fourth Monarchy, in divine history. In *De iurisdictione imperii*, Tolomeo asserts that the first emperor, Augustus, recognized the passing of the Fourth Monarchy and his own subordinate position:

From all of which it appears evidently that Christ had the priestly and regal dignity in the highest grade, from which flowed all the dignity and authority mentioned above. In sign of which, as Comestor says, on the day of his birth the Temple of Peace fell down and Caesar Augustus forbade anyone to call him [Augustus] Lord. Orosius and Innocent III explained the reason for this: on that same day, at noon Caesar diligently interrogated the Tiburtine Sybil in the secrecy of his room about the divine cult and who was the true God in this world. When the Sybil gave herself over to the oracle, there appeared a circle around the sun and in the middle of the circle a most beautiful virgin with a boy in her lap. Then the Sybil said: 'Look at this, Emperor!' As Caesar was stunned by this vision, he heard a voice from heaven saying: 'This is the altar of heaven', and the Sybil said to him, 'This boy is greater than you, therefore adore him'. Which he did. And then according to the custom of the ancients of the city, which I will relate below, he ordered that no one should adore him or call him Lord.¹⁰

¹⁰ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 6, pp. 16–17: 'Ex quibus omnibus evidenter apparet, quod Christus habuit dignitatem sacerdotalem et regalem in summo gradu, a quo fluit omnis dignitas at auctoritas supradicta. In cuius signum, ut dicit Commestor, in die sue nativitatis templum pacis hedificatum a primo domino Urbis ibidem corruiet et Cesar Augustus prohibuit, ne quis eum dominum vocaret. Causa autem assignatur ab Orosio et Innocentio III, quia eodem die in meridie, cum dictus Cesar in secreto sui cubiculi diligenter a Sibilla Tyburtina perquireret de culto divino

Tolomeo's long 'digression' on the origin of lordship in general in this same treatise was his attempt to support further the relationship of church and emperor by refuting the argument that because the empire preceded the church, the rule of the latter depended on or was subordinate to the former. Its substance is that since all lordship is from God, who disposes it as he sees fit, and especially to advance the end of salvation, then clearly the emperor had no independent authority, and God was within his rights to bestow lordship on Peter and his successors as vicars of Christ, something that no emperor was ever called.¹¹

The subordination of ends and the unitary concept of Christendom still presumed in *De iurisdictione imperii* virtually demands the subordination of the secular to the spiritual. While the original unitary theory, the one found in Otto von Freising, for example, presumes a single head for the secular hierarchy — the emperor — who in turn was subject to the pope, there was no reason why this should be the case, any more than there needed to be a single, superior bishop below the pope, and Tolomeo never expresses it in that way. If the pope combined the regal and sacerdotal functions, the Roman Empire as it existed after Christ was simply one part of the Fifth Monarchy, not conceptually different from any other state in this regard. *De iurisdictione imperii* abounds with arguments to prove the proper organic subordination of the imperial member. One strong assertion of the unitary concept came in response to the claim of dualists that since the pope had no superior in spiritualities, nor the emperor in temporalities, and since the pope's election immediately gave him papal rights, so too did the emperor's election give him imperial rights.¹² Tolomeo, while not denying the emperor's temporal authority, responded that nevertheless 'the virtue of his jurisdiction depends on the jurisdiction of the pope', since 'in the mystical body of the church there are distinct offices, such as the head and members, as in a corporal body, but all never-

et quis verus Deus esset in hoc mundo, cum dicta Sybilla oraculo se dedisset, apparuit circa solem circulus et in medio circuli virgo pulcherrima puerum gestans in gremio. Tunc Sybilla: "Respice," inquit, "imperator!" Cum autem Cesar stuperet ad visionem predictam, audivit vocem ad celo dicentem: "Hec est ara celi," dixitque ei Sybilla: "Hic puer maior te est, ideo ipsum adora." Quod et fecit. Et tunc more veteranorum Urbis, de quibus infra dicitur, precepit, ne quis eum, ut dictum est, adoraret vel dominum vocaret.' 'Which I will relate below' refers to the statement, chap. 23, p. 46, that no Roman in the republic wore a diadem. In *De regimine principum*, 1.5.5, Thomas Aquinas made the more historically accurate statement, 'From the beginning the emperors were unwilling to be called kings, because this title was odious to the Romans.'

¹¹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17–25, pp. 36–47, and especially chap. 20, pp. 40–41, chap. 25, p. 47.

¹² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 2, p. 5.

theless depend on one from which all movement and sensation come, which is Christ, in whose place the highest pontiff stands'. He adds, as he also wrote in *De regimine principum*, that in nature everything is reduced to a first principle, like heat to fire, or human motion to the soul through the mediation of the heart, or celestial motion to the Prime Mover. The analogy with motion was particularly relevant for Tolomeo, since he could argue that just as it was in the heavens, where celestial bodies and angels, being closer to the Prime Mover, participate more in his virtue, so too on earth the pope as vicar shares more than do other creatures in God's virtue as the principle of human and political actions, and therefore all jurisdictions (not just that of the emperor) depend on him. Elsewhere in *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo says similarly that ecclesiastical and secular rulers (not just the emperor) stand in the same relationship to the pope with respect to rule as the celestial bodies and angels do to God.¹³ In contrast, *De iurisdictione ecclesiae* defends the same earthly hierarchy primarily on the necessary subordination of all to the person primarily responsible for the ultimate end of eternal life.¹⁴

Only one section of *De iurisdictione imperii* seems to grant the empire in Tolomeo's day any theoretically different role from that of other states. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Tolomeo saw the revelation of the divine plan not only in the sequence of world monarchies and the philosophical and theological concepts of subordination, but also in the nature of Old Testament kingship and the succession of Christ to the regal and priestly lines of ancient Judah. He also relates the events of the Old Testament in a more specific way to the Roman Empire. Since the Jewish Scriptures, properly understood, are really a hidden account of the Christian Church to come, the history of rule in them also tells us about the present dispensation. In them, Tolomeo alleges, kingship was always subordinated to the priesthood. Thus, Samuel chose a commoner, Saul, as king and deposed him when he sinned. Likewise, he chose David, and although David's son Solomon succeeded him, this was only through the intervention of the prophet Nathan. All Israelite kings required priestly anointing for legitimacy, however they came to the throne, and the jurisdiction God's representative bestowed in their inaugural solemnities could be withdrawn and

¹³ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 15, pp. 33–34; chap. 7, p. 19: 'virtus sue iurisdictionis ex iurisdictione pape dependet [...] in corpore mistico ecclesie esse distincta officia sicut caput et membra ut in corpore materiali, omnia tamen ab uno dependere, a quo est omnis motus et sensus, quod est Christus, cuius vices summus pontifex gerit.'

¹⁴ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b.

the king deposed, as Joiada showed by removing Athalia and installing Joas as king. In the new disposition, ‘the emperor truly imitates the ancient rulers of the Jews’.¹⁵

Tolomeo explains that the emperor was similar to the Hebrew king in four ways. First, a priest anointed them both. Second, neither could claim the office by hereditary right (though this did not preclude actual hereditary succession in some periods), but only because of virtues that made them deserving of rule, to stand, even in a limited way in the place of Christ, the summit of all lordship. Third, his most important task was to increase and strengthen the divine cult. Fourth, both Jewish king and Roman emperor prospered when they devoted themselves to God and suffered when they did not. Tolomeo provides examples of good and bad deaths among the emperors: the three emperors most devoted to God and subject to the church (in his fantasy at least) — Constantine, Justinian, and Charlemagne — died peacefully in their old age and were victorious above all others, while the arch-persecutors — Julian the Apostate, Otto IV, and Frederick II — died miserably and young.¹⁶

Tolomeo’s later works omit this typology, and the only significant passage in them that even suggests a unique and preordained imperial role occurs in *De iurisdictione ecclesie*. In commenting on the verse of Jeremiah that Innocent III famously applied to himself in his coronation sermon — ‘Behold, I constitute you over nations and kingdoms, that you may tear up and dissipate, build and plant’ — Tolomeo writes: ‘Two clauses are posed pertaining to correction by reason of transgression when he says “tear up and dissipate” and two clauses are posed pertaining to construction, that is to ordination and disposition of the empire when he adds “build and plant”’.¹⁷ Other than through this typology, Tolomeo’s comments here did not privilege the later Roman Empire except through the pope’s role in it. We could perhaps read them to imply that the pope could intervene for transgression anywhere, but could build and plant only in the empire. If so, Tolomeo may merely have been suggesting that the Bible anticipated the distinction between the pope’s rights as vicar anywhere and his specific rights in the empire by virtue of the Donation of Constantine. Or Tolomeo may have meant

¹⁵ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 4, p. 9; chap. 5, p. 12: ‘imperator vere imetetur antiquos principes Iudeorum’.

¹⁶ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 4, pp. 9–11, chap. 5, pp. 14–15; chap. 30, pp. 60–62.

¹⁷ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b: ‘duae vero clausulae pertinentes ponuntur ad correptionem ratione delicti cum dicit, ut “evellas et dissipas,” duae vere clausulae pertinentes ponuntur constructionem, hoc est ad ordinationem, et dispositionem Imperii cum subditur “et aedifices et plantes.”’

all his words to apply to the empire. If so, he would not necessarily have been denying that the same typology applied to any state, but was addressing only the imperial situation in a treatise on the empire. In neither case would there be any necessary presumption of imperial permanence.

The important question remains as to whether the four similarities with the Old Testament kings were unique to the emperors in a way that created a meta-historical role for the contemporary empire. The third and fourth similarities (their primary duty to strengthen religion and their success or failure as dependent on devotion to God) are the easiest to resolve, since Tolomeo frequently wrote that they applied to all rulers. Even in the same chapters in which Tolomeo wrote about the similarities of emperor and Jewish king, he notes that Gentile rulers recognized the necessity of subordinating their regal rule to the priestly. Although Tolomeo refers to 'rulers' in general and not to emperors, two of his examples kept the principle within the imperial framework. Alexander the Great, he says, bowed down to the Jewish High Priest Jaddus, adored the God whose vicar he was, and as a result successfully established his empire. Pompey, on the contrary, spurned the Jewish High Priest and lost all his later battles. Alexander was an emperor of the Third Monarchy, and Pompey an aspirant to the leadership of the Fourth, but the Vandal Totila (Attila) was merely an ordinary king who moderated his behaviour at Pope Leo's behest and left Italy.¹⁸ At the end of *De iurisdictione imperii*, in an interpretation of Exodus 17.12 to which I will soon return, Tolomeo states that emperors, and ecclesiastical officials as well, must support the church, just as Hur and Aaron held up Moses' heavy hands. But he adds that Hur was a figure of all secular rulers, not just emperors or their nobles.¹⁹ These examples all pertain to submission to the 'true God', but in *De iurisdictione ecclesie*, citing Thomas Aquinas's part of *De regimine principum*, he commends rulers, including the pagan Romans and Gauls, who submitted to the local religion.²⁰

As for the fourth similarity, we saw in previous chapters how Tolomeo generalized the principle of bad ends for bad rulers and (sometimes) success for good ones.

The second similarity (the basing of the right to rule on virtue not heredity) is a little trickier, especially since Tolomeo indicated that the emperor in some

¹⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 4, pp. 9–14.

¹⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31, p. 63.

²⁰ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b.

sense ruled in the place of Christ. But his assertion that no emperor was ever vicar of Christ²¹ warns us not to jump to conclusions. Since Christ stood at the apex of both temporal and sacerdotal authority, any secular ruler ruled in his place, as did every priest in the ecclesiastical realm. The position of the emperor is special to be sure, but this stems solely from the relationship of the pope to the empire by virtue of the Donation of Constantine. It was only the Donation that empowered the pope to determine the form of imperial election and examine the candidate thus chosen to evaluate whether he had the virtue required for the position. Nothing of this imparted an eternal or metahistorical role on the emperor, or a power different in its essentials from that of any other ruler.

The place of imperial coronation (the first similarity) is another difficult problem. Theory alone did not convince Tolomeo that it was necessary before the emperor received his jurisdiction, so he turned to custom, which he said provides authority where law is lacking. He quotes Innocent IV: 'It is one thing for other kings, who are anointed by their own pontiffs [i.e., archbishops], from whom they take the oath of fidelity for the things subject to them temporally, and another concerning the Roman ruler, who seeks the honour of empire and the diadem from the Roman pontiff and binds himself in the chain of fidelity and subjection, just as antiquity hands down and modernity approves', and adds that by custom and de facto practice for the previous 250 years emperors had been crowned before they used the imperial title. As an example he cites the oath of Otto II to Pope John XI, which put the exercise of imperial rights in the future tense. He points to several German kings who held their title for a long time but were not included in the catalogue of emperors because they were never crowned. One distinction of these offices was that the German king acquired his right of administration in his kingdom, but not in the empire, by virtue of his election, even before regal unction.²²

Since both required unction, the only difference between emperors and kings aside from the basing of the right to rule on virtue, not heredity, was a rather tech-

²¹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 5, p. 47.

²² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 30, pp. 60–62, citing Innocent IV in *Acta imperii inedita saeculi XIII et XIV*, ed. by E. A. Winkelmann, 2 vols (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1880–85), II, 699: "Aliud est," inquit, "de regibus aliis, qui a suis pontificibus inunguntur, a quibus pro temporalibus subiectionibus fidelitatis recipiunt iuramenta, aliud de Romano principe, qui Romano pontifici, a quo imperii honorem et dyadema consequitur, et fidelitatis et subiectionis vinculo se astringit, sicut antiquitas tradidit et modernitas approbavit." Krammer points out that the popes Tolomeo cites did not say that regal unction was not necessary, and that this was Tolomeo's personal opinion.

nical consideration, based on precedent, not theory, of the time one was chosen for the honour and the possibly different time when one formally became entitled to exercise the powers of the office. Near the end of *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo gives some more reasons why coronation was necessary for the emperor's jurisdiction and not for others'. As a general principle, he says, the more pre-eminent a position, the more solemnity should be involved in its establishment: gems, for example, the most precious natural objects, require the longest generation, and humans, the most worthy of animals, experience the longest gestation. Finally, Tolomeo interprets Exodus 17. 12, in which Moses relates that his hands were heavy in the execution of his duties, as signifying the heavy responsibility of the church, which, according to a popular proverb, had lead wings and iron feet. Tolomeo asserts that this 'elegantly complements' what he had just said about natural processes and, although this does not logically flow from either the natural analogies or the biblical interpretation, concludes:

Therefore by these reasons and figures, prescribed and approved by custom, it can be concluded by legitimate persuasion that, except through the highest pontiff, in whose hands are all things of Christ in virtue, as is clear from the things already said above, and also as ordained by a new canon, the one elected as emperor legitimately can not legitimately administer the rights of the empire with the necessary confirmation through the taking up of the oath of fidelity, with the other unction and coronation by the vicar of Christ not following.²³

Since Tolomeo extended the figure of Hur to other secular rulers, coronation signified no essential difference between kings and emperors other than the greater dignity of the emperors and the authority of custom. Thus, three of the ways in which the emperor was similar to the Israelite king on inspection turn out to apply for the most part to all other kings, and the fourth is a historical artefact. Yet his greater dignity, his possibly special role in defending the church, the fact that Tolomeo points to the Israelite king as a type for the emperor alone, and the specific mention of him standing in the place of Christ single him out from all others.

To put these things in their proper context we need to look more closely at how Tolomeo formulated the relationship between empire and papacy, in

²³ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31, pp. 62–63: 'Hiis ergo rationibus et figuris, consuetudine iam prescripta et approbata, legitima persuasione concludi potest, quod nisi per summum pontificem, in cuius menu sunt omnia Christi virtute, ut patet ex dictis iam supra, aliud disponatur ex canone novo, electum imperatorem legitime iura imperii administrare non posse confirmatione necessaria per iuramenti fidelitatis susceptionem, unctione ulterius ac coronatione a Christi vicario non subsecuta.'

particular at his approach to papal power and his interpretation of the Donation of Constantine. He wanted above all to foreclose the possibility that anyone would get the impression from some of his arguments that the pope had no general right to exercise temporal power directly except as an overseer who could correct erring rulers. In *De iurisdictione imperii* an extended exegesis of Jesus's words, 'My kingdom is not of this world', faces head-on the objection of those who would restrict the pope's binding power to spiritual matters.²⁴ John 18. 36 continues, 'If my kingdom were of this world, my ministers would have fought for me not to be handed over to the Jews, but now my kingdom is not here.'²⁵ For Tolomeo, Jesus did not in any way renounce secular lordship or plenitude of power either for himself or his vicars, but spoke these words to refute three different errors about his nature that were believed by his parents, disciples, and the Romans respectively. His parents thought that he was going to be the future king of Israel. But Jesus, Tolomeo argues, could not be an earthly king, whose jurisdiction depended upon a physical descent tainted by the sin of Adam, when his jurisdiction came from a mystical body. His disciples among the Jews thought he would drive out the Romans and redeem the Jews. But Jesus sought the 'proper end of the civility', true felicity in the Kingdom of Heaven under an eternal ruler, not one that changed over the course of time, as did the kings of this world, who according to Aristotle sought the political felicity to which political virtue led.²⁶ The Romans, hearing the false accusations of the Jews, believed that he intended to take power from them by violence. But Jesus did not, unlike the kings of the world, seek wealth, pomp, and tyranny. If he did, Tolomeo asserts, his apostles and the twelve legions of angels he could summon would easily have prevailed, whereas he intended to recover his kingdom through spiritual means, and so told Peter to put his sword back in its sheath.²⁷

Jesus always possessed universal dominion in Tolomeo's view and wanted this to be recognized by everyone, but he rejected using force to achieve his goal. The Donation of Constantine thus represented the partial triumph of his plan, a voluntary cession of lordship to Christ's vicar by the most powerful earthly state. It was important for Tolomeo to show that Constantine intended to recognize

²⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 2, p. 7.

²⁵ John 18. 36. Tolomeo cites the exegesis of Augustine and John Chrysostom.

²⁶ Note that this argument would no longer hold up after Tolomeo changed his basic conception of the nature of human ends.

²⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 28, pp. 55–58. I have switched the order of points two and three.

the pope's a priori claim, since if the emperor were merely bestowing the administration of part of his realm through a grant similar to that which he might have used for any subordinate, it would follow that the pope had no temporal authority in any other region, and perhaps even that the emperor could revoke his appointment.²⁸ It was to counter this interpretation that Tolomeo had proposed the Five Monarchy theory. His purpose was not merely to reiterate the divine mandate of the church, but also to justify the taking away of lordship from the Roman rulers, even though he had argued in the 'digression' on the origin of lordship that they deserved the lordship that God had conferred on their empire. Tolomeo's answer was that there is no such thing as a natural right to lordship. God gives it and takes it away as it pleases him. 'No perpetual lordship is found in the world'; all would perish except for the Kingdom of Christ. Constantine's action certified that God had translated monarchy to the church.²⁹ For the previous three hundred years the pagan emperors had usurped rule from the Fifth Monarchy, but as a true Christian, Constantine acknowledged the offence and sought to make amends.

In his decree, therefore, Constantine had not alienated imperial lands in Tolomeo's view, since by divine law he had none to begin with. Thus Tolomeo had no need to refute the common objections that Constantine acted illegally in diminishing the lands entrusted to him without the consent of the public officials of the imperial court and that even if he could, he could not bind his successors. As mere acknowledgement of a pre-existing right, the Donation did not depend upon consent for its validity, but Tolomeo noted that it had been sought and granted; Constantine acted with 'all the satraps, senate, optimates, and all the Roman people submitting themselves to the Roman Church'.³⁰ In *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii* Tolomeo repeats his comments about consent and adds that in addition to transferring the imperial dignity to Pope Sylvester, Constantine conferred the role of Senate on the clergy of Rome, which Sylvester signalled by naming these clergy 'cardinals' for the first time.³¹

The two consecutive chapters of *De iurisdictione imperii* just summarized interweave the two interpretations of the Donation, resulting in two distinct lines of argument about papal authority. Consent would not have been necessary to

²⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 2, p. 5.

²⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, pp. 48–50; chap. 26, p. 50.

³⁰ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 26, p. 51: 'dicit se hoc fecisse una cum omnibus satrpphis et universo senatu et optimatibus ac universo populo Romano ecclesie Romane subiacenti.'

³¹ *De origine ac translatione*, p. 67, citing both the Donation of Constantine and comments of Jerome that 'the church has the Senate' (*Decretum*, C.16, q.1, chap. 7).

legitimize the God-given general authority of Christ's vicar, but it may have been a practical necessity in order to authorize a new and particular governmental power over certain provinces of the Roman Empire. It is the second of these lines that is the primary focus of *De origine ac translatione*, and to a lesser extent *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, though both also appropriate many of the historical examples given in *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum* and apply them to their own perspectives.

The Donation explicitly limited the privileges it ceded to the western provinces of the Roman Empire and consequently it entailed no theoretical consequences for Constantinople and the east. If one assumes, therefore, as Tolomeo did, that Constantine issued his grant at least partially to recognize the pope's theoretically rightful rule throughout the Fifth Monarchy, which extended to the entire world, the specific grant of authority over the west must have been a completely separate matter. This becomes clear when we look at Tolomeo's presentation of the translation of the empire theory. There are two obvious ways to defend the translation. Tolomeo could have ignored the Donation and justified the Pope's actions as an instance of the exercise of his universal authority. Or he could have used the Donation to argue that the Pope merely transferred his own specific authority over the Western Empire and the imperial regalia that Constantine ceded in the Donation of Constantine to someone of his choosing. He does neither, and instead attempts the more difficult task of using the Donation to defend a broad interpretation of the translation. He claims that the Pope translated empire from the Greeks to the Franks (or Germans) in the person of Charlemagne. As he writes in *De origine ac translatione et statu Romani Imperii*:

It is manifestly clear that there were three translations of the empire, the first of Constantine, who [transferred] the Western Empire to the Roman Church in the person of the blessed Sylvester, the second of the empire from the Greeks to the Franks, and the third from the Franks to the Germans by the Roman Church, done for the reasons mentioned, and, that of the two translations of the Western Empire [...] the rebellions and disobedience of evil ones against the church were the attendant cause, from all which it can manifestly be concluded that the power especially inheres in the Roman Church of translating the Western Empire [...]. For rational causes pertaining to utility of the church and the whole Christian people, the two last reformations of translation were made by the Roman Church, to which pertains *imperium* of this kind.³²

³² *De origine ac translatione*, p. 73: 'Patet manifeste tres fuisse translaciones imperii, primam de Constantino, qui occidentale imperium in persona beati Silvestri in Romanam ecclesiam [transtulit], secundam ipsius imperii de Grecis in Francos et terciam de Francis in Germanos per ecclesiam Romanam factus ex rationibus antedictis et, quod duarum translacionum occidentalis

Although the reference to utility reflects the later date of this treatise, Tolomeo also calls it a translation from the Greeks in *De iurisdictione imperii*. He derived the language from Innocent III's decretal *Venerabilem*, but revealingly also styled it on one of the two translations of the *Western Empire*. In conjunction, these two phrases must mean that although the pope obtained the direct rule of the Western Empire by the Donation, the emperor in Constantinople remained the sole Roman emperor in the years between Constantine and Charlemagne, the overall head of the Roman Empire in both east and west. Tolomeo acknowledges this in his praise of Justinian, and for that matter of Constantine himself after he moved his capitol. So what the pope translated was not merely political authority over the whole of the territory of the historical core of the ancient Roman Empire plus the Germanic lands, but rather the *title* of emperor from Constantinople to the Franks, together with the imperial rights the pope already possessed over the Western Empire by virtue of the Donation of Constantine. Pope Sylvester did not directly challenge the Emperor in Constantinople's right to remain ruler of the empire centred there, but only his right to be Roman emperor.

In defending the translation, Tolomeo combined two distinct rights he attributed to the pope, both of which he could also reasonably say were implicit in the Donation of Constantine. First, like any ruler, the pope could delegate his legal authority over his territory to an agent. As Tolomeo wrote in *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, the pope could act in the empire like any king in his kingdom.³³ Second, since the primary function of the Roman Empire was to protect the church, the pope could take the title of emperor away from anyone who was unable or unwilling to do this and give it to someone who could. Tolomeo states this explicitly in *De origine ac translatione*: 'For the good of the state of the church or the Christian people, the Roman Church could transfer the empire for reasonable cause from nation to nation, and it was accustomed to do this in former times.'³⁴

imperii [...] rebellionis insuper et inobedencie per malos contra ecclesiam attentate fuerunt causa, ex quibus omnibus potest manifeste concludi maximam inesse Romane ecclesie potestatem circa translationem occidentalis imperii [...]. Nam ex causis rationabilibus pro utili facto ecclesie et totius populi Christiani facte sunt due ultime reformationes translationis predictae per Romanam ecclesiam, ad quam huiusmodi imperium pertinebat.' See Innocent III, *Venerabilem*, *Decretales* I.16.34.

³³ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 471a.

³⁴ *De origine ac translatione*, p. 73: 'Ergo Romana ecclesia possit pro bono statu ecclesie vel populi Christiani propter rationabiles causas transferre imperium de gente in gentem, et sic facere consuevit temporibus retroactis.'

Such an action could be defended on the basis of Constantine's acknowledgment of the pope's overall authority and the emperor's duty to serve the church as well as on the pope's specific authority in the Western Empire. It is not always certain which of the two justifications Tolomeo was using. In the same later treatise, for example, he says that if the Germans proved ungrateful, 'the church might deprive them and transfer the imperial dignity to another devout Christian country'. This formulation could reflect either principle, but Tolomeo continues with a purely legalistic justification, 'since by right on account of ingratitude it can and is accustomed to revoke benefices'.³⁵ Frederick Barbarossa may have been furious when the Pope's representative suggested the empire was a papal benefice, but here at least, as perhaps then, the claim was not made that every government was a papal fief, but only the empire, because of the Donation of Constantine. In *De regimine principum* Tolomeo makes clear a distinction between kings and emperors in this regard through the symbolism of the two imperial crowns:

The second way emperors are like kings is their crown, since they are crowned as kings. Those elected as emperor receive a double crown, one near Milan in a village called Monza, where the kings of the Lombards were buried. This iron crown is said to be given to symbolize the subjugation of the Lombard kings and their nation by Charlemagne, the first German emperor. He receives the second crown, which is made of gold, from the Supreme Pontiff, who presents it to him with his foot to signify the emperor's subjection and fidelity to the Roman Church.³⁶

De iurisdictione ecclesiae does mention papal authority over all rulers, but for the most part it justifies the translation in much the same way as *De origine ac translatione*. Even in the section devoted to the power of the papacy, Tolomeo very quickly switches from the hierocratic: 'Pre-eminence over all lordship per-

³⁵ *De origine ac translatione*, pp. 74–75: 'tanti beneficii ingratos dicta dignitate privaret Romana ecclesia et ipsam imperialem dignitatem transferret in aliam catholicam devotam nationem, cum de iure propter ingratitude viciū collata possit et soleat beneficia revocare.'

³⁶ *De regimine principum*, 3.20.6: 'Secunda convenientia imperatorum cum regibus est corona, quia coronantur ut reges. Duplicem enim habent coronam et recipiunt electi in imperatorem. Unam quidem prope Mediolanum, in villa quae dicitur Modoeitia, ubi sepulti sunt reges Longobardorum; quae quidem corona ferrea dicitur esse signum, quod primus imperator germanus Carolus magnus colla regum Longobardorum suaeque gentis perdomuit. Secundam coronam, quae aurea est, a summo percipit pontifice, et cum pede sibi porrigitur, in signum suae subiectionis et fidelitatis ad Romanam Ecclesiam.' For the origins of the story of the pedal presentation, see Von Michail A. Bojkov, 'Wie die Kaiser seine Krone aus den Füßen des Papstes empfing', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 32 (2005), 163–98.

tains to it [...] by divine right, since the pope stands in the place of that one [Christ]', to the legalistic consequences of the Donation:

But it is another right acquired by the church through the collation or cession of Constantine, as was related above in the First Title, which we call a positive right, although it could be reduced to lordship, and from this the provision and governance of the whole empire is incumbent on him, just as on any king with respect to his kingdom; whence [the pope can act] just as kings [and] can change or get rid of something in their kingdom for reason of transgression, where it is incumbent for the evident utility of their kingdom.³⁷

A similar mixture of arguments informed Tolomeo's discussion of the workings of the imperial government, for example, in his defence of the central thesis of *De iurisdictione imperii*: the pope has the right to vet the imperial candidate and must confirm or crown him for him to have imperial jurisdiction. Tolomeo contends that the emperor depended upon the pope as vicar of Christ and head of the mystical body of the church, but this argument does not specifically address the issues of election and reception of jurisdiction. The anointing of the Israelite king as a type for the emperor does speak to these issues, but Tolomeo devotes many of his arguments to the formal procedures of confirmation and crowning, something of great practical importance, especially in Italy. Tolomeo rejects as invalid the obvious objection that popes had not always confirmed emperors, certainly not in ancient times, and not even in most periods afterward:

And what is said, that just as then the elected one acquired the right of *imperium* for acting at the time of the election, so now also it should be done in a similar way, this appears not to be true, because the mode then and now is different, because the present mode has its strength from the institution of the church, as is clear from the above, but the ancient mode only from the execution of the imperial ministry, first, because up to then the true lord had not appeared, to whom recourse must be had for confirmation, as to a superior, and then from the custom usurped by the rulers, then from the carelessness of the church, no case of which things takes away the right from the highest pontiff, since those things that are of ecclesiastical subjection can not be prescribed by length of time, as all law [*ius*], whether canon or civil, testifies.³⁸

³⁷ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, pp. 470b–71a: 'Competit sibi praeeminentia super omne dominium [...] jure divino, quia Summus Pontifex illius vices gerit [...]. Sed est aliud jus acquisitum Ecclesiae per collationem sive cessionem Constantini, de quo dictum est supra in primo titulo, quod positivum appellamus, licet ad dominium reduci possit, et ex hoc incumbit sibi provisio et gubernatio totius imperii, sicut cuiuslibet Regis sui Regni; unde sicut reges possunt in suo regno propter rationem delicti, aliquid immutare vel exigere, ubi incumbit utilitas sui regni evidenter.'

³⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 26, p. 51: 'Et quod dicitur: Sicut electio tunc ius acquirebatur imperii in exequendo facta electione, ita et nunc simili modo esse deberet, apparet non esse verum, quia diversus est hic modus et ibi, eo quod modus presens vigorem habet ex institutione ecclesie, ut

Nor does Tolomeo find it to be a valid objection that it would be reasonable, given the distance of the imperial election in Germany from Italy, to allow the emperor to begin the administration of the empire immediately after his election. He bases his response primarily on relatively contemporary canon law, specifically the decretals of Innocent III, though he maintains also that these pronouncements simply canonized the electoral policy in existence from the end of the Ottonian dynasty on. In 'Venerabilem' Innocent III had specified the correct form of the imperial election and its aftermath, recognizing the rights of the electors to choose the king and nominate him as emperor, but insisting that 'the right and authority of examining the person chosen as king to be promoted to emperor pertains to us, who anoint, consecrate, and crown him'. There were no imperial rights without papal confirmation and the emperor's oath of fidelity.³⁹ Tolomeo was not saying that the papal right derived from the Ottonian and canonical precedents alone, but that these precedents re-established what had always been the pope's prerogative in theory, although this was lost historically through imperial usurpation and ecclesiastical carelessness.

This treatise and the other later works combine principles derived from the Donation and the inherent papal right to act for the common good of Christendom to establish the papal right to make constitutional and geographical changes in the empire. In *De iurisdictione ecclesie* Tolomeo writes:

Therefore, according to this consideration the governance of the empire depends on the pope. From the collation made to him, it pertains to him both to ordain and dispose how much he should judge to expedite the favour of the church and the utility of the Christian people. And thus he does not exercise the rights of the empire against some emperor by reason of transgression alone, but in so far as it avails more to expedite the utility of the church and the peace of the whole Catholic and faithful people. And thence it is that often we find the pope change something about the state of the empire.⁴⁰

ex supradictis est manifestum, antiquus autem modus solum habebat ex executione imperialis ministerii tum, quia adhuc verus dominus non apparebat, ad quem recurrendum erat pro confirmatione sicut ad suum superiorem, tum ex consuetudine usurpata per principes, tum etiam ex dissimulatione ecclesie, quorum nullus casus ius aufert summo pontifici, cum ea, que sunt ecclesiastice subiectionis, per longitudinem temporis prescribi non possint, ut iura omnia sive canonica sive civilia hos testantur.

³⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 29, p. 59. Tolomeo here also rejects another argument — that Innocent III gave the rights to administration without confirmation in certain distant ecclesiastical elections — by pointing out that Innocent's decretal was revoked by the Council of Lyon. For Innocent III's text, see *Decretales*, I.6.34, *Venerabilem*.

⁴⁰ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 471b: 'Secundum igitur hanc considerationem cum gubernatio Imperii ex Summo Pontifice dependeat; ex collatione eidem facta, pertinet ad ipsum

A little later he states the combination most directly: the pope acts in changing the empire 'not only from the collation of the empire made to him, but also from preeminence of status', once again citing Innocent III's hierocratic letter to the Byzantine emperor, *Solitae*, as well as his decretal *Venerabilem*, which specifically relates past changes in the empire to papal action.⁴¹ Tolomeo uses all these arguments to justify both the several 'translations' of the empire and the change in the method of selecting the emperor, though always, he says, the Pope's motivation was, properly, the good state of the church and that of the Christian people. Throughout Tolomeo's various writings the essence of the changes that the Pope supposedly instituted in the Roman Empire remained the same, even if the historical details changed slightly, sometimes inconsistently, and the justifications varied, sometimes because of the practical issue being addressed and sometimes because of Tolomeo's intellectual evolution.

In particular, Tolomeo's understanding of the nature of government in general, and imperial and papal rule in particular, changed radically between *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum*. In the earlier treatise Tolomeo was under the influence of Thomas Aquinas's conception of moderate or tempered monarchy, in which a king is balanced by the power of the aristocracy and to some extent the people. So it was natural that when he thought of the government of the empire and church, or any other monarchy to which he was favourable, he framed it in these terms. In one instance, Tolomeo leaves unchallenged the premise that the emperor needed the consent of his subordinate rulers.⁴² In another passage he treats ecclesiastical and secular monarchs analogously in commenting on a verse of Exodus about Moses and his 'coadjutors':

He [Moses] said to the elders of Israel, according to Exodus 24 [.14]: 'You have Aaron and Hur with you, and if any question should arise, refer it to them'. By this we are shown that those assigned to the salutary councils that I have mentioned ought to help and support the leaders of the faithful. On the one hand, the Aaronites, that is, the cardinals and other major prelates of the churches, ought to support the ecclesiastical leader, for which reason councils were long ago instituted. On the other hand, the Hurites, that is, the rulers [princes] and barons, ought to strengthen the civil leader, whether he be a king,

et ordinare et disponere quantum iudicat magis expidire favori Ecclesiae et utilitate populi Christiani. Et sic non pertractat jura Imperii contra aliquem Imperiatorem solum ratione delicti, sed prout magis valet expidire utilitate Ecclesiae et paci totius populi catholici et fidelis. Et inde est quod saepe per Summos Pontifices invenimus circa statum Imperii aliquod immutatum.'

⁴¹ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472a., citing *Decretales*, 1.33.6, *Solitae*, and 1.6.34, *Venerabilem*.

⁴² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 26, pp. 50–51.

or emperor. For this reason they established parliaments, which ought to set themselves to the end of taking counsel to profit the leader's government, otherwise, if by chance something should be decided incautiously with hasty counsel, what comes from the throne of buffoons may easily be revoked by their successors, as in fact we see. Hence Solomon writes in Proverbs 13 [10], 'They who do all things with counsel are ruled by wisdom', whose duty it is to ordain all things according to wisdom. Likewise, Proverbs 33 [actually 24. 6] says, 'Where there is much counsel there will be safety'. The ancient Romans, as is clear from what I said above, are especially commended for this in the period in which the republic flourished. For he to whom they had committed its magistracy or consulate for a year, as the Book of Machabees relates, took counsel daily with the Senate concerning the multitude, so that they might do those things that are worthy. The Roman Church acts in the same way today, for the highest pontiff takes counsel with the cardinals, who hold the position of the senators.⁴³

This fourfold comparison: the Church, the Roman Republic, Roman Empire, and secular kingdoms is an extension of Thomas's treatment of the Mosaic kingship. Just as there were councils of the Jews that ruled jointly with Moses, so too do the Roman Senate, the College of Cardinals, subordinate rulers in the empire and kingdoms, and national parliaments share in the rule of their respective polities. The head is the most important element — this is why most of these are called monarchies, but the other elements rightfully have a share of the rule and must be consulted by the head. Tolomeo's implication is that the Roman Republic was also a kind of mixed monarchy, with the consuls filling the monarchical role.

By the time he was writing *De regimine principum* Tolomeo had concluded that a king in the true sense of the word could not be bound by others or the law, through an elaboration of what came for him to be the primary categories of rule:

⁴³ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31, pp. 63–64: 'Dixit senioribus Israel, Exodo XXVIII, "Habetis Aaron et Hur vobiscum, si quid questionis natum fuerit, referte ad eos." Per quod nobis ostenditur, quod duces fidelium eo modo assignatis in predictis salutaribus consiliis ferri debent ac sustentari, dux quidem ecclesiasticus Aaronitis, id est cardinalibus et aliis ecclesiarum prelatibus maioribus, propter quod fuerunt ab antiquo consilia instituta, dux vero civilis sive rex sive imperator fulciri debet Huritis, id est principibus et baronibus, et ideo ab eisdem instituta sunt parlamenta, que ad hunc finem disponi debent, ut profectibus sui regiminis consulatur, ne, se forte consilio festinato aliquid diffiniatur incaute, per eorum successores, ut de facto videmus, quod cedit in sedis ridiculum, facilius revocetur. Hinc per Salomonem scribitur, Proverbis XIII: "Qui cuncta agunt cum consilio, reguntur sapientia," cuius est omnia secundum sapientem ordinare. Item Proverbis XXXIII: "salus erit ubi multa consilia." De quo specialiter veteres commendantur Romani, ut supra patuit, quando floruit res publica. Ille enim, cui magistratum seu consulatum pro suo anno commiserant, ut in libro Machabeorum continetur, cottidie agebant cum senatu consilium de multitudine, ut, que digna sunt, gerant, quemadmodum adhuc hodie Romana observat ecclesia, summus pontifex cum cardinalibus, qui locum possident senatorum.'

regal and political. This approach altered his understanding of the nature of both papal and imperial rule. Neither fit clearly into the regal/political dichotomy. The pope retained his supreme position in the world as vicar of Christ and ruler of the Fifth Monarchy, and Tolomeo gives his rule a special name, 'sacerdotal and regal lordship'. He no longer mentions any restraints by cardinals or others, since this would be incompatible with the pope's regal nature.⁴⁴ The emperor, Tolomeo asserts, shared some characteristics with political rulers, in that he got his office through election, not heredity, and did not have to be noble. His actual power and his relationship to law was purely regal; once elected and anointed he ruled by his will alone.⁴⁵ Nor was the form of his election permanent: according to Tolomeo, not only had the electors changed over time, but in the Carolingian and Ottonian periods the empire became hereditary. Only after that period had the Pope restored election in the form still current in Tolomeo's day.⁴⁶ It goes without saying that Tolomeo no longer considered the Roman Republic a monarchy in any sense.

In the chapters between his analysis of papal and imperial power, Tolomeo discusses pure regal rule, and while he admits that true kingship was good he consistently associates regal rule with despotism. It was natural for Tolomeo to discuss the pope before kings, then the empire as a particular form of kingship, reserving political rule for the next book, of which it was the primary subject. But this arrangement also served to separate papal rule from the suspect secular kingship. The former was regal because of its rule by will, but because of its divine institution Tolomeo could present it as exempt from the limitations of regal rule. Imperial rule was not so exempt, although it had worked better than most monarchies, since the pope had clear and recognized mechanisms, through the Donation of Constantine and the translation of the empire, for keeping it under control or giving rule to someone who would act for the good of Christendom. The result was that most emperors, according to Tolomeo, obeyed the church in both spiritualities and temporalities.⁴⁷

In *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo did not repeat the fourfold analogy elaborated in *De iurisdictione imperii* between the emperors and the Hebrew kings, although he doubtless would still have accepted it. It would not, however, have

⁴⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.10.

⁴⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.20.

⁴⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.19.1.

⁴⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.17.

carried the same implications, since in the later work the emperor would have been imitating rulers that Tolomeo now portrayed as tyrants who had displaced the earlier, better government of the Judges. To the extent to which imperial rule was unique in its form, it was an artefact of historical forces and the legal ability of the pope to determine the method for election and to validate the candidate chosen. Although I drew essentially the same conclusion in my analysis of the earlier work, it is nevertheless true that the direct use of typology to associate the emperors with the rulers of the Chosen People gave the emperors a prestige that Tolomeo in his later work no longer accorded them. Perhaps this is why he dropped the analogy.

Although Tolomeo tended to rely on the Donation of Constantine for papal rights over the empire, he never limited himself to this justification, or to a claim of power over the empire alone. Even before he had elaborated the regal and sacerdotal model of papal rule, he held that God gave the pope all power on earth, but the latter did not have the same specific feudal rights anywhere but in the empire and in other places whose king he had convinced or coerced to turn his kingdom into a papal fief. In *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo limits himself to cases of intervention in the empire, whereas in the later treatises on empire he repeatedly invokes the general right of papal intervention in the affairs of any government for reason of transgression, and also occasionally insists that the pope could act even if there were no compelling transgression. For instance, in *De iurisdictione ecclesie* he writes: 'It will be his [the pope's] to dispose concerning other governments, but especially for reason of transgression, and this is true for all rule whether regal or imperial.'⁴⁸ More often, as he does a few lines later, he refers to transgression alone, 'The power or authority of the pope is clear from divine right over all rulers for cause of transgression', here justifying himself with Innocent III's famous decretal *Novit*, in which the Pope assured the King of France that he was acting against him not as one empowered to judge concerning a fief, but as one properly constituted to decide questions of sin.⁴⁹ Entangled with the doctrine of the pope as vicar of Christ is another principle, that it is the function and nature of religion of any kind to judge morality in the governance of its society, as well as in the lives of individuals. In the same treatise, Tolomeo

⁴⁸ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 471a: 'Ergo suum erit ex causa de aliis regiminibus disponere, sed praecipue ratione delicti.'

⁴⁹ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 471a, citing *Decretales*, II.1.13, *Novit*. Tolomeo names Innocent III and *Novit* but gives an incorrect citation of the source.

praises the Druids, who, like the Christians, he claims, had one supreme priest who presumably acted in ancient Gaul as the pope did in Christendom.⁵⁰

Tolomeo did not want to give the impression that the situation was symmetrical, that, for example, as John of Paris argued, both the pope and emperor had the right to intervene in each other's affairs if they perceived a deficiency in the other. The asymmetry was an obvious consequence of the theoretical differences in the mode and origin of their rule, but there were several historical situations Tolomeo was forced to explain in which the emperor had intervened in a praiseworthy way to reform the church or appoint popes. For example, before Otto I was crowned, Otto had ejected the reigning Pope John XII and installed his own candidate, Leo VIII, whom he was forced later to reinstate after John reclaimed his seat. Both *De origine ac translatione* and *De iurisdictione imperii* accept John's evil nature and justify the intervention on the basis that the cardinals had summoned Otto, and *Historia ecclesiastica nova* discusses the meaning of the events in detail. John became pope only through the power of his rich family, Tolomeo reports, and he scandalized the church by keeping concubines and going on hunts. When Otto arrived in Rome in response to the cardinals' summons, all the clergy and people embraced him. Though warned repeatedly by the cardinals, clergy, and Otto, John refused to renounce his evil ways, so they forced him to resign and by common assent elevated Leo. Tolomeo also mentions an alternate theory, that 'when a synod had been convoked [...] perhaps by Otto at the petition of the clergy of Rome, and of all bishops as it were of the whole of Italy, John, accused of nefarious deeds, was deposed, and Leo, who had been a layman until then, was substituted'.⁵¹ Either scenario makes Otto's role that of service to the clergy at their bidding and undercuts the potential claim that it was something he could do on his own authority. Note also that this explanation assumes some right of the clergy and people to discipline the pope, as Tolomeo had believed under his earlier theory of papal power in *De iurisdictione imperii*, but which was seemingly at odds with the idea of papal power as regal and sacerdotal. Unfortunately, Tolomeo does not explain himself, perhaps fearing to open up a discussion of the kind of limitations on the pope that he had been anxious to dissociate himself from in

⁵⁰ *De iurisdictione ecclesiae*, ti. 4, p. 472b, citing *Decretales*, l.33.6, *Solitae* and *De regimine principum*, l.15.12.

⁵¹ *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, xvii.15–18, cols 1037–39: 'Convocata Synodo [...] forte per Ottonem ad petitionem Cleri Romani, et omnium Episcoporum quasi de tota Italia, Joannes de nefariis accusatus, deponitur, et Leo adhuc laicus substituitur.' See also *De origine ac translatione*, p. 71; *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 12, p. 27.

De regimine principum, but he is at least consistent with the dominant canonistic teaching that emergency situations justified interventions not otherwise theoretically permissible. It did not require devolving any regular or constitutional right of oversight.

His quandary is even more apparent in a similar situation, when Emperor Henry III, in the years around 1046, deposed and appointed several popes at will, acts that were much approved by church reformers at the time. Surprisingly, only *Historia ecclesiastica nova* even mentions this important precedent. In this case, there was a council, but Tolomeo could not claim that the cardinals were behind it:

Those [popes] ejected because of their merits and by the definition of the synod made some resistance, but by canonical and imperial censure, as Martin says, they were deposed, because they had not entered by the door, and thus Henry substituted Suidegerus, Bishop of Bamberg, who took the name Clement II according to the ordination of the synod. And attend to this: that there was not mention of the cardinals but of the synod, because then perhaps they were not in full concord, just as happens at other times, and thence Henry was compelled to gather a council, lest the Roman Church vacillate.⁵²

In this case also the Emperor is depicted as helping the church and acting in the depositions as an agent of a church council, but with less justification than in the earlier instance, especially because it was the Emperor who called the council. Even more than that first case, these events raised questions of the ecclesiastical constitution and the power of cardinals or a council to bind or depose a pope in the commentaries of canon lawyers from the mid-twelfth century on, and once again Tolomeo declined to participate.

Tolomeo had an easier time explaining several instances in which a few emperors exercised a continuing power over the election of the pope. *De origine ac translatione* asserts that Charlemagne was given the 'disposition of the church', *Historia ecclesiastica nova* reports that Otto I had veto power over papal election, and *De iurisdictione imperii* adds to these the examples of emperors Mauritius and Honorius, who had the right to choose the pope. All of these cases, according to Tolomeo in *De iurisdictione imperii*, were examples of *de facto* not *de iure* powers

⁵² *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XVIII.29, col. 1061: 'Quia illi ejecti suis meritis, et per definitionem Synodi aliquam fecerunt resistentiam; sed Canonica, et Imperiali censura, ut dicit etiam Martinus, depositi sunt, quia per ostium non intraverunt; et hic Clemens II dictus Suidegerus et Episcopus Bambergensis per potentiam Henrici substitutus iuxta Synodi ordinationem. Et attende hic, quia de cardinalibus non fit mentio, sed de Synodo, quia tunc forte non erant in plena concordia, sicut alias accidit, et inde coactus est Henricus Concilium congregare, ne Romana Ecclesia vacillaret.'

that the pope conferred as a temporary reward for a particular person by virtue of his right to delegate power, normally because of the great service to the church of a ruler who saved it from the violence and heresy. The pope might also grant such a power in a period of crisis, but according to Tolomeo, in no case did it detract from the inherent right of the church to govern itself or manage the overall affairs of Christendom, including the empire. He cites various examples to prove that the pope could always retake the sword he had ceded.⁵³

Tolomeo thus admitted no equivalence or reciprocity between pope and emperor, and in almost every case that did not involve the pope's specific feudal rights over the empire he asserted that the pope had exactly the same power over any king as that he had over the emperor. There are only a few places in Tolomeo's writing that even suggest a unique or permanent role for the Roman Empire, and all of these occur in Tolomeo's immature treatise, *De iurisdictione imperii*. This includes the analogies with Old Testament kingship and most of the statements about the greater dignity of the emperor compared to other kings. When we looked carefully at the Old Testament typology, we saw that every imperial characteristic other than election and to some degree anointing by the pope (instead of another bishop, because of custom) applied as well to other kings. If the emperor was of a higher dignity than other kings, it was largely because of the historical position of the Roman Empire and his relationship with the church through the Donation of Constantine. Because the church originated under the empire and Christian emperors nurtured it, the emperor acquired the position, even more than other rulers, of protector of the church. So long as it existed it had this responsibility, and the pope strove to bring it back when it strayed, through his inherent powers and those given to him by the Donation of Constantine. But even in *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo never asserts the permanence of the Roman Empire, and in fact says explicitly that no secular rule is eternal.

Why then did Tolomeo initially portray the Old Testament kings as types of the emperors and not of other kings? In part, I think it is because he had picked up the notion of imperial permanency in his youth. Pocock was quite right that this idea permeated medieval culture. Although it no longer was consistent with his evolving theoretical conceptions of the nature of worldly government, it still made its way into his writing. That the Hebrew kings were imperial types does not necessarily imply permanence, any more than the Hebrew kings were permanent. It was the popes who were their permanent successors, as well as the successors of

⁵³ *De origine ac translatione*, p. 69; *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, XVII.20, col. 1040; *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 2, p. 5, chap. 27, pp. 52–55.

the Hebrew High Priests. What the Old Testament could mean, if we accepted the Christian assumption that it contained in figures the whole history of Christ and his church, is that a line of Christian emperors would arise to nourish and support the early and/or the medieval church, but this would not require that they would do so forever. Of course, Tolomeo never said this, but neither did he say that the empire would endure.

VARIETIES OF GOVERNMENT

We know Tolomeo primarily for his secular political thought, and rightly so, but he would probably have been annoyed to find this out. Much more important for him were the subjects of the last few chapters: God's plan, human purpose, the triumph of the church as Fifth Monarchy, and the function of the Roman Empire and other governments in defending it. He would likely have regarded his history of the church as his supreme achievement, with perhaps his interpretation of Genesis second. Both were central steps toward his goal of compiling a vast and comprehensive secular and ecclesiastical history of humankind, to which *De regimine principum* and the treatises on papal/imperial relations were peripheral — he may even have thought of them as necessary distractions. He no doubt had affection for the republican governments of Lucca and other cities, and the way of life of his family and its class. He no doubt felt obliged to defend these when they were under attack and to defend the church against improper imperial usurpations. But these issues were not often the subject of his attention, if we can judge by his writing. He focuses on the theory of government in only one treatise, *De regimine principum*, and in a few passages elsewhere. Aside from mentioning in *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De operibus sex dierum* that humans are social animals who required no coercion before sin, and in *De iurisdictione imperii*, following Thomas Aquinas, that advisory councils are necessary for governments, Tolomeo indulged in no real analysis of government before or after *De regimine principum*. This work repeats his ideas on papacy and empire, but only in two chapters.¹ His enthusiasm for papal rule had not waned, as these sections and his later works make clear, but his concern in *De regimine principum* was the organization of actual political communities and the variety of

¹ *De regimine principum*, III.10.2–III.11.

governments possible or desirable in them. But he never forgot that above all was the divine and universal lordship of God, exercised on earth by his vicar, to which all other human government must ultimately be subject.

Despite Tolomeo's priorities, scholars today almost always portray him solely as a republican analysing and promoting the best kind of government. Aside from unjustifiably ignoring the limited place government occupied in his overall production, this portrait overplays the place of republican government in his political thought. He was equally concerned with types of government that were suitable for those incapable of self-rule, more so in a way since these people comprised the great majority of humanity. He was also interested in the ways that less-than-optimal governments failed to fulfil the criteria of good regimes. I have pointed this out with respect to Tolomeo, and in a recent article Cary Nederman applied the same thought to a wide range of medieval political writers and sought to show how many of them diverged from the approach of Aristotle's *Politics* in this matter.²

I have argued that Tolomeo was increasingly influenced by Aristotelian ideology over time and increasingly incorporated it in his writing, but at the same time I have also tried to demonstrate how his Aristotelianism was merely one aspect of a much more complex and contradictory mentality. Even in his specifically political works his approach is often quite different from Aristotle's. At no time, for example, does Tolomeo outline or define Aristotle's six varieties of government — monarchy, aristocracy, polity, democracy, oligarchy, and tyranny. He does occasionally use these words, and in *De regimine principum* he refers a couple of times to the formal classification Thomas Aquinas employs in his part.³ *De iurisdictione imperii* assumes kingship, although it is ambivalent about it, and *Annales*, *Historia ecclesiastica nova*, and the treatises never even mention the forms or do more than allude to government as such beyond the immediate concerns of the writing.

In a few passages of *De operibus sex dierum* and more systematically in *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo set out another classification of rule, also derived from Aristotle, but curiously different from that author's presentation of them, which he saw as more basic and which I have called 'modes of rule' to distinguish it from the more familiar sixfold schema. Tolomeo's list differs significantly from

² Cary Nederman, 'Imperfect Regimes in the Christian Political Thought of Medieval Europe: From the Fathers to the Fourteenth Century', *Mélanges de Université Saint-Joseph*, 57 (2004), 525–51.

³ *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, IV.1.2, referring to I.2.2–3.

that of Aristotle, who identifies regal, political, despotic, and household rule. Tolomeo's modes comprise sacerdotal and regal, regal alone, political, and household.⁴ He also ignores Aristotle's warning that these modes were not ways of characterizing the typical organization of communities of different sizes. Tolomeo tended to apply sacerdotal and regal rule to the world, regal rule (in general) to a large kingdom or province, political rule to the city, and household rule to the home.⁵ As an exception, Tolomeo often supported political rule for a large polity. Because of Tolomeo's concentration on secular government in *De regimine principum*, he devotes the great bulk of his treatise to the modes appropriate to it, viz. political and regal. He planned a separate treatise for household rule.

The crucial omission in Tolomeo's modal classification is Aristotle's despotic rule. At first glance one might think that his two modes could not possibly describe all government, since they seem to leave no place for bad government. The alternative would be that both good and bad government could be exercised in one of these modes, so that perhaps monarchy, tyranny, and despotism were forms of regal rule and aristocracy, polity, oligarchy, and democracy forms of political rule. Tolomeo must have had something like this in mind originally, and there remain numerous passages to support it. When he says that the Bible shows that despotic rule can be 'reduced' to regal rule we may think we understand him in this way, but then he turns it around and tells us that we can count regal rule as despotic.⁶ Even the first 'reduction' goes against Aristotle's strict separation of the two. Tolomeo realized this, since immediately following his comment he wrote that he would resolve the contradiction in the next book,⁷ but he never fulfilled his promise. And like all the other medieval writers who used the terms *regal* and *political*, no matter how rigorously they defined them, he could not help at times applying the words loosely to kingship and republican government respectively. *De regimine principum* as a whole works against any one interpretation at every turn, and we are left with an inconsistent but fascinating muddle, revealing the workings of a mind struggling to reconcile all its influences, and having a basic dislike of kingship in spite of all the authorities who praised it. Although all of Tolomeo's early works take monarchy for granted in both good and bad polities,

⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.10.1: 'Recepit igitur divisionem dominium quadrimembrem ex eadem causa et ratione, quia quoddam est sacerdotale et regale simul; aliud autem est regale solum [...] tertium vero politicum; quartum autem oeconomicum.'

⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.1, III.10.

⁶ *De regimine principum*, II.9.1, IV.8.4.

⁷ *De regimine principum*, II.9.2.

even his earliest work, *De iurisdictione imperii*, shows hostility toward monarchy, in its remark that the goal in the Kingdom of God was virtue, not the 'exercising tyranny or ostentation as with earthly kings'.⁸

If you recall, in a discussion of the angels in *De operibus sex dierum*, Tolomeo introduces the terminology of political and despotic rule (which Tolomeo uses in this treatise for the first and only time before *De regimine principum*) to distinguish the differing views of pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory the Great on the nature of the power exercised by the angelic order of Powers. He does not make any explicit value judgements, but he does suggest that the despot's power was similar to the situation in kingdoms.⁹ In this comment, especially if one tries to read back from *De regimine principum*, one may suspect a general dislike of monarchy, since after all the word *despot* has the connotation of harsh and oppressive rule, even if both Tolomeo and Aristotle thought that it was often necessary, and Tolomeo applied it in general to the monarchical governments of the trans-Alpine provinces. As early as *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo had contrasted the direction of citizens toward supreme virtue in Christ's Kingdom with the goals of earthly kings of exercising tyranny and displaying their riches.¹⁰ In *De regimine principum*, despotic rule often is indistinguishable from regal rule or tyranny and Tolomeo had a hard time defending kingship as an acceptable option for a free people. He says that although Aristotle sometimes used a more complex classification of government (presumably the sixfold schema), at other times he wrote in terms of the categories of political and despotic alone.¹¹

Tolomeo defines these modes in *De regimine principum*, citing but not completely reproducing Aristotle's formulation of them. Despotic rule is the rule of a master over a servant, which makes it similar to regal government, in which a king rules by laws that he himself determines, and unlike political government, in which the ruler or rulers normally govern according to laws that the citizens themselves impose or at least in which the rulers depend upon the citizens in significant ways beyond election and passive consent. These are the essential characteristics, but Tolomeo does not bind himself narrowly to them; rather he associates a complex of characteristics with each. Political rule includes citizen-made law and

⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 28, p. 58: 'In suo regno cives ordinantur per Christi officiales ad culmen et perfectionem virtutum, non ad exercendam tyrannidem vel ostensionis fastigium ut reges terreni.'

⁹ *De operibus sex dierum*, III.9, pp. 45–46.

¹⁰ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 28, p. 58.

¹¹ *De regimine principum*, II.8–II.9.

limitation of rulers, but also plurality of rulers, alternation of rulers, election, judgement of past rulers, mild rule, and salaries for the rulers. Regal rule is based on the ruler's will, but also includes the rule of one, permanence of ruler, inheritance of rule, immunity of the ruler, harsh rule, and no salary for the ruler.¹² Not every regime shares all the criteria, so that it can vary more or less from the model regime, and thus not be purely political or regal. Tolomeo was much more concerned with historical development and concrete examples than most other scholastic writers of political thought, and this orientation forced him to be more flexible and empirical in applying his categories. Tolomeo thought that the characteristics associated with each mode go together naturally and would normally be found together, but he was willing to recognize exceptions.

By a combination of alternation with his idea of plurality he was able sometimes to consider the rule of one as political and remove the onus of despotic rule from someone of whom he approved. If various citizens alternated in the exercise of their offices or ruled for a limited period, Tolomeo would have said that plurality existed even if only one person ruled at a time. This is how he, unlike Thomas, could call the rule of the Roman dictator aristocratic.¹³ At times he could broaden the definition of political rule to the rule of one or many under law, and still maintain his criterion of plurality and his fusion of mode and species of rule. As we saw in the last chapter, imperial rule had some characteristics of each mode: it was political since office was elective and open to all, it was regal since emperors had jurisdiction like that of kings, were crowned, made law, and had arbitrary power over their subjects.¹⁴ Put more simply, it was political since the emperor depended on the many and regal since he ruled by will. As a more extreme example, in ancient Chalcedon Tolomeo could even accept a king within a political government, so long as there were also democratic or aristocratic bodies whose active consent was necessary for him to act. Tolomeo could not deny that the Chalcedonian official held the title of king, but he did not consider him to be regal in his meaning of the term.¹⁵

Making the definitive criterion for characterizing governments whether they operated through the will of the ruler or the power of the many meant that Tolomeo could not easily and consistently employ Aristotle's schema to distinguish

¹² See, e.g., *De regimine principum*, II.8–II.9, IV.1, IV.7.

¹³ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.2.

¹⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.20.1, 4–8. See also *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 30, p. 61.

¹⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.19–20.

sharply the two forms that depended on will: regal and despotic. At times it appears that he is not even conscious of what he is doing when he interchanges them. For example, he says that Aristotle distinguished political and *despotic*, but then explains it in this way: 'Political rule exists when a region, province, city, or town is governed by one or many according to its own statutes [...]. [I]n *regal* lordship [...] the rulers, not being obligated by the laws, may judge by what is in their hearts.'¹⁶ Tolomeo's changed position on kingship reflects his increasing reliance on Aristotle, who denied that kings bound by law fit the strict definition of 'king'.¹⁷ Alone among medieval writers, Tolomeo grasped the potential implications of this: a political king was a contradiction in terms, and if a king was by definition above the law, his rule could never satisfy a virtuous people.

Tolomeo's formulation of the distinction between regal and political was doubtless shaped by that of Thomas Aquinas, who could have written the passage above, except for the use of 'despotic', which for him was quite distinct from 'regal'. But Thomas, with his precise separation between the formal and modal classifications, had no reason to deny the possibility of a political king, and in fact incorporated one into his mixed constitution. Even though Tolomeo's criterion for political rule was that it rested on the many, he concurred with Thomas that that supremacy of law characterized that mode:

Political rectors are bound by laws and cannot proceed beyond them in seeking justice, but this is not the case with kings and other monarchical rulers, because laws are hidden in their hearts and applied in each individual case, and what pleases the ruler is held to be law. This is what the laws [*iura*] of nations tell us, but we do not find the same thing said about political rectors, because they do not dare to do anything new beyond the written laws.¹⁸

¹⁶ *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, II.8.6: 'Politicus quidem quando regio sive provincia sive civitas sive castrum per unum vel plures regitur secundum ipsorum statuta [...] per regale dominium [...] dum, non legibus obligatus, per eam censeat, quae est in pectore principis.' The italics are mine, and the ellipses separate fairly distant passages, but I believe the point is valid.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, III.16.1287a1.2–3.

¹⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.3, citing *The Body of Civil Law: Institutes*, I.2.6; *Digest*, I.4.1: 'Et quoniam utrumque pluralitatem includit, ista duo genera [aristocratia et politia] ad politicam se extendunt, prout dividitur contra regale seu despoticum [...] legibus astringuntur rectores politici, nec ultra possunt procedere in prosecutione iustitiae, quod de regibus et aliis monarchis principibus non contingit, quia in ipsorum pectore sunt leges reconditae, prout casus occurrunt et pro lege habetur quod principi placet, sicut iura gentium tradunt: sed de rectoribus politicis non sic reperitur, quia non audebant aliquam facere novitatem, praeter leges conscriptas.'

The importance of law is nowhere more apparent than in Tolomeo's identification of despotic with regal rule. Charles Till Davis argues that Tolomeo at times understood Aristotle's distinction between regal and despotic, but tended to lump them together since both depended on the will of the ruler instead of law.¹⁹ But since his emphasis was not on the end toward which the government was directed but on whether the rulers' power depended upon their own will or on the will of the many, it became exceedingly difficult conceptually to separate regal and despotic rule, especially since, unlike tyrannical rule, both benefit their subjects, at least incidentally.

Tolomeo's position on the modes of rule developed in tandem with his increasing regard for secular rule, demonstrated through his more frequent reliance on Aristotle, the evolution of his ideas about the ends of rule, and a consequent heightened suspicion of monarchy. *De operibus sex dierum*, probably written a few years before *De regimine principum*, made more use of Aristotle's political works (eight citations of *Politics*, thirteen of *Ethics*) than any of his works except *De regimine principum*. In it, for the first time, Tolomeo employs the Aristotelian categories of political and despotic rule²⁰ to analyse the power of angels and the government in Eden, in the process transforming ideas originally presented in *De iurisdictione imperii*. In the earlier treatise Tolomeo merely paraphrases Thomas's words from *Summa theologiae* about the government of consulting and directing in Paradise instead of servitude, but does not characterize this rule further. In *De operibus sex dierum* he writes:

It is manifest that even in the State of Innocence there was lordship, because it exists even among the angels, as the doctors [sc. Thomas] say, not indeed despotic lordship, but political. Whose reason can be on the one hand that a human even then was a social animal; moreover every multitude is ordained to one just as to a principal directing and moving, as Aristotle says in *Politics*, Book I.²¹

¹⁹ Davis, 'Roman Patriotism', pp. 413–14.

²⁰ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, pp. 192–93. Tolomeo cites Aristotle, *Politics*, I.5.1254b.5–6, which does not exactly say what is attributed to it.

²¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIV.8, p. 211: 'Constat enim quod etiam in statu innocentiae fuisset dominium, quia etiam inter Angelos est hoc, ut sacri Doctores volunt, non quidem despoticum, sed politicum. Cuius ratio esse potest tum quia homo etiam tunc erat animal sociale: omnis autem multitudo ad unum ordinatur sicut ad principale dirigens, et movens, ut Philosophus dicit in I Politicorum.' See also IX.7, pp. 116–17. A few pages later, XV.2, p. 221, he repeats this with an interesting variation, calling political rule 'directivum unius ad alterum, sicut est inter homines sapientes, et virtuosus, et etiam inter Angelos'.

In *De operibus sex dierum*, Tolomeo situates these categories of rule largely within the family, and this served to reinforce their monarchic nature, since the paterfamilias dominated each family relationship through one of the modes.²² The coming of sin did not affect the basic nature of the relationships within the family, which Tolomeo defends as natural through citations of the *Politics* and *Ethics*.²³ Family needs make humans necessarily social animals: mutual assistance (since even in Eden children needed to be fed and educated), mutual consolation, and conjugal copulation and procreation.²⁴ Sin only made life harder, the conjugal relationship even more necessary, and the larger association of the city obligatory. At the time of *De operibus sex dierum*, it was still possible for Tolomeo generally to ascribe political rule to a monarch, such as the paterfamilias, who exercised his power regally with respect to the children, politically with respect to his wife, and despotically with respect to the servants. But as he increasingly came to consider political and regal rule as inclusive of all rule and mutually exclusive of each other and came to identify regal and despotical rule, it became more difficult for him to treat household rule as a separate mode of rule and to categorize consistently the relationship between husband and wife, as I discussed in an earlier chapter. Tolomeo's dilemma may well be one reason he deferred his detailed analysis of domestic rule to a separate, never written, treatise.

The logic of Tolomeo's development should surely lead to his rejection of kingship altogether. By *De regimine principum* he showed no enthusiasm for any nonpolitical secular government and had almost completely identified regal and despotical rule. This is why most scholars consider him a dedicated republican. But when read in its entirety, the text cannot support this conclusion. Tolomeo sometimes approved monarchy and sometimes tried to defend it as a good form of government. He often wrote that monarchy is necessary for most peoples and occasionally enumerates the abstract benefits of monarchy. He often starts a passage with a withering attack on kingship, but ends up by restricting the suitability of political rule to a few regions or peoples. I do not think that these contradictory statements can ever be satisfactorily resolved, since they reflect insoluble internal conflicts in Tolomeo which only increased over time, especially the conflict between the Aristotelian view of good government as the implementation of natural

²² For medieval analysis of family relationship in these Aristotelian categories, see Blythe, 'Family, Government', pp. 1–16. I briefly refer to *De operibus sex dierum*, p. 12 n. 40, but do not substantially address its ideas, or Tolomeo's generally, there.

²³ *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.2, pp. 222–23.

²⁴ *De operibus sex dierum*, xv.1, p. 220.

instincts to promote the common good, and the Augustinian and biblical arguments for the corrupt nature of humanity, making all government a form of oppressive servitude, necessary to restrain sin. Tolomeo never admitted he saw a conflict, but I read much of his writing on forms of government as a valiant but unsuccessful attempt to resolve the contradictory paradigms.

For Aristotle the primary criterion of whether a government was good or bad was whether it served the common good; any government that served only a part of society was *ipso facto* deformed. Following the translation of Aristotle's *Politics*, Thomas Aquinas and others began to use this concept extensively, but, as Cary Nederman points out, the common good was a topic a few political writers discussed even earlier. John of Salisbury, whom Tolomeo cites, for example, writes that ancient political philosophers believed that officials had the duty to serve the 'public utility' and defines the 'public welfare' as 'that which fosters a secure life for everyone and all individuals'.²⁵ But except for his later stress on the well-being of the body politic, and thus indirectly on the common good, John never developed these ideas; after the first quotation above, he moves to the necessity for nobles to abjure inordinate pleasures and magic; after the second he switches to the evils of flattery. Tolomeo never cites these passages or mentions the common good in a way reminiscent of them, so it is unlikely that he picked up the idea from John.

Tolomeo does not mention the common good in any work except *De regimine principum*, where it became a central theme: twice he says that according to Aristotle the common good is divine,²⁶ and he uses it as the criterion for legitimate rulers: 'Their power, and that of any other lordship, is ordained to the end of profiting their flocks, so that those whom vigilance inclines toward the utility of their subjects are deservedly called shepherds. Otherwise they are not legitimately lords but tyrants, as Aristotle proves.'²⁷ He often uses the concept, if not the words, in giving examples of virtuous citizens and rulers.

²⁵ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, in *Opera omnia*, ed. by J. A. Giles, 2 vols (vols 3 and 4) (Oxford, 1848; repr. Leipzig, 1969), I.3 (III, 19); III.1 (III, 161): 'Est igitur salus publica, quae universos fovet, et singulos, incolumnas vitae.'

²⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.3.2, III.11.4. In the first reference, Tolomeo cites both *Politics* and *Ethics*, but only *Ethics*, VIII.13.116a11–15, explicitly calls the common good divine, although *Ethics*, I.2.1094b.8–10, where Aristotle says that the final end must be the good for human beings, and it is better and more godlike to achieve the end on behalf of a city than of an individual, states it indirectly.

²⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.10.8, referring to I.2.2, I.4.5, III.7.3, and Aristotle, *Politics*, III.7.1279b.6: 'ad hoc ordinatur ipsorum potestas et cuiuslibet dominii ut prosint gregi, unde merito pastores vocantur quibus vigilantia incumbit ad subditorum utilitatem. Alias non sunt legitime domini sed tyranni, ut probat Philosophus.'

A comparison of similar sections of *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum* on Roman virtues shows how Tolomeo's deepening appreciation of Aristotle affected his understanding of the common good. In both works he praises the Romans for their love of fatherland, love of justice (tradition of laws in *De iurisdictione imperii*), and their benevolence. The reason in the earlier work was that in governing they focused on 'preserving the republic'.²⁸ This is also a common theme of *De regimine principum*, but its justification of Roman rule is directed more explicitly to ideas of community and common good: love of fatherland, for example, 'participates in the divine nature by directing its affection to the community [...]. Thus, Aristotle says in *Ethics*, Book I, that the good of a nation is a divine good.'²⁹ Later, Tolomeo similarly opposes tyranny: 'A tyrannical government [...] is not ordained except as a burden and annoyance to its subjects. It is characteristic of tyrants to seek their own, and only their own, utility and convenience [...] as Aristotle relates in *Ethics*, Book VIII.'³⁰

By the time of *De regimine principum* Tolomeo explicitly links the common good to the good of the state, in that, 'for the good of the republic, as for defence of the kingdom or whatever other cause rationally pertains to the common good', rulers are justified in taxing citizens beyond the customary amount. Since the primary common good of the citizens as social animals is the very existence of society, whatever is necessary for the preservation of society is allowed by natural right.³¹

In these arguments, the increasing presence of Aristotle is clear. Nor can his inclusion be window dressing, Tolomeo merely deploying whatever arguments he could dig up to defend his predetermined conclusions. Although Tolomeo's final conclusions in both works are identical, his intermediate conclusions and rationales, which Tolomeo applies in *De regimine principum* far more than the final

²⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 21, p. 42: 'tota eorum intentio erat in ipsorum regimine sive dominio ad conservandam rem publicam'.

²⁹ *De regimine principum*, III.4.2: 'Participabat quamdam naturam divinam eo quod communitatem suus fertur affectus [...]. unde et Philosophus dicit in 1 Ethicorum quod bonum gentis est bonum divinum.' The citation is Aristotle, *Ethics*, I.2.1094b.8–10.

³⁰ *De regimine principum*, III.7.3, referring to the portion attributed to Thomas Aquinas, I.2.2, I.4.5: 'tyrannicum regimen [...] non ordinatur nisi ad onus et molestiam subditorum. Tyranni enim proprietas est propriam et solam sui utilitatem et commodum quaerere, ut [...] Philosophus tradit in 8 Ethicorum.' The citation is Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII.11.1161a34–35.

³¹ *De regimine principum*, III.11.6–7: 'quod pro bono reipublicae possit exigere, sicut pro defensione regni vel pro quacumque alia causa pertinente rationabiliter ad bonum commune'.

conclusions, are radically opposed. That all power is from God is a commonplace that can be made compatible with any form of government. But the demotion of the secular ruler from a divine monarch to a collection of possibly changing citizens necessary for preserving the common good is something Tolomeo was not able to reconcile with his earlier beliefs without the help of Aristotle's *Politics*, despite his admiration for the Roman Republic and northern Italian city-states.

Preserving the common good requires the choice of the best officials. Tolomeo thought it wrong to exclude those deserving to participate, so, 'the more laudable polity is that in which honours are distributed in turn according to the merits of each individual citizen, as the ancient Romans did, and Aristotle also finds this to be more commendable'.³² He realized that a polity under political rule might fail if it did not choose suitable rulers: 'Aristotle tells us in *Politics*, Book IV, that suitable ones come from the middle ranks of the city, that is, ones neither exceptionally mighty, who would easily tyrannize, nor ones of exceedingly low condition, who would immediately democratize'.³³ These desirable rulers would be prevented from abusing their power because they were bound by laws made by the multitude. In stressing the middle-class composition of the ruling elite, Tolomeo looked to the form of government practised in many northern Italian cities.³⁴ He believed that it was most conducive to harmony, best able to overcome the inevitable clashes originating from class divisions, the division of labour, and multiple forms of human diversity. This was precisely Aristotle's concern. Given the turmoil in Italian cities, especially amid the acute period of crisis around 1300, Aristotle's comments that only a strong middle class could mediate among the classes and limit factionalism must have been especially appealing to Tolomeo,³⁵ and his solution is quite close to Aristotle's, although, as we will see in the next

³² *De regimine principum*, IV.7.7: 'Laudibilior igitur politia, in qua secundum merita unicuique civi vicissim distribuuntur honores ut antiqui fecerunt. Romani, quam etiam Philosophus magis commendat.'

³³ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.5–6: 'Aristoteles tradit in Politicorum liber 4 mediocres civitatis, hoc est nimis potentes quia de facili tyrannizant, nec nimis inferiores conditionis quia statim democratizant.' The citation is Aristotle, *Politics*, IV.11.1295b.25–35.

³⁴ See also Ulrich Meier, 'Bürgerlich vereynung: Herrschende, beherrschte und "mittlere" Bürger in Politiktheorie, chronikalischer Überlieferung und städtischen Quellen des Spätmittelalters', in *Bürgerschaft: Rezeption und Innovation der Begrifflichkeit vom hohen Mittelalter bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Reinhart Kosselleck and Klaus Schreiner, Sprache und Geschichte, 22 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1994), pp. 43–89 (p. 70), for this observation and much more on the concept of the middle-class polity in Tolomeo, Giles of Rome, and others.

³⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, IV.12.1296b–97a.

chapter, there are quite a number of ways in which he distorted Aristotle's arguments and rejected his assumptions.

Tolomeo's middle-class state was not something to which every polity could aspire: it did not apply to places in which the people were 'servile by nature'.³⁶ Good government was impossible for such people, Tolomeo believed, but where it was possible, among peoples who possessed 'a virile spirit, a bold heart, and a confidence in their intelligence', like the Italians, it was the only suitable form.³⁷ Aristotle apparently shared Tolomeo's attitude to some degree. Although he often praised kingship theoretically, he tended to relegate any acceptable instance of it to degraded peoples, like the barbarians, or to some mythical golden age, or to some superhuman ruler.³⁸ Tolomeo comments on the third possibility: 'Aristotle says in *Ethics*, Book V, that we do not allow a person to rule in whom human nature alone is present, but rather one who is perfect according to reason.'³⁹ Tolomeo doubted that such a paragon could arise in the real world, so he rejected Aristotle's idealistic situations and approved of kingship only for the first possibility, for those peoples incapable of a better government. Both Tolomeo and Aristotle responded similarly to the objection that it was dangerous to allow the many to rule: there is little danger 'if the multitude is not exceedingly vile'.⁴⁰ For both men, degenerate peoples need tyrannical kingship, but political government better serves the virtuous.

The whole question of how to pick the best officials comes up in *De regimine principum* in the course of a more general discussion of whether permanent or changing rulers were best, and in response to Aristotle's representation of Plato's preference for the former in *The Republic*.⁴¹ Aristotle castigated Plato, warning

³⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.4: 'Quaedam autem provinciae sunt servilis naturae, et tales gubernari debent principatu despotico, includendo in despotico etiam regale.'

³⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.4: 'Quaedam etiam virilis animi et in audacia cordis et confidentia suae intelligentiae, et tales regi non possunt nisi principatu politico, communi nomine extendendo ipsum ad aristocraticum.'

³⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, III.14.

³⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.2: 'Philosophus etiam in 5 Ethicorum dicit quod non sinimus hominem principari in quo est natura humana tantum, sed illum qui est perfectus secundum rationem, quia si aliter fiat assumptus ad principatum, dat sibi plus de bonis et tyrannus efficitur.' The citation is Aristotle, *Ethics*, V.6.1134a.35–36. Tolomeo was also using, though he does not cite it, Aristotle, *Politics*, III.17.1288a, 1284a.

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, III.11.1282a15–17: 'si sit multitudo non nimis vilis'.

⁴¹ *De regimine principum*, IV.7–8.

that his proposal would lead to discord. He wrote that Plato's view derived from the belief that the nature of individual humans was unchanging, a product of the gods' creation of each newborn as an amalgam of various metals, permanently fixing its character and capacities. Since their natures did not change, neither should their rulers.⁴² Tolomeo, you will remember, did accept the astrological determination of human nature, but he also denied that fate controlled the human will. He argued that a good human could become bad or vice versa, so having permanent rulers would be both dangerous and potentially disruptive.⁴³

While Tolomeo's position in *De regimine principum* is consistent with the reasoning of Aristotle's *Politics*, it conflicts with that of *De iurisdictione imperii*. We can see this by looking at a parallel series of arguments about the natural foundation of rule in Tolomeo's two treatises, which differ subtly about the status of a ruler. For example, in the 'argument from being', *De iurisdictione imperii* maintains: 'Those who have lordship are more vigorous in the nature of being than a private person, because they act in place of all being, of which they are in charge, whence they deserve divine honours.' This identifies the ruler as one of Aristotle's superhumanly virtuous men, whom Tolomeo ties to myths of kings' curative powers: 'This even appears in modern rulers with catholic and ecclesiastical men, that from special divine influence over them from a fuller participation of being they have singular virtue over the people labouring in sickness, as are the kings of France, our lord King Charles, and is reported of the King of England.'⁴⁴ The parallel argument in *De regimine principum* simply states, 'all being derives from the First Being, as does lordship, since it is founded on being. To the extent that it is founded on a more noble being, it comes before the others to exercise lordship over persons who are equal by nature. Whence there is no cause for pride,

⁴² Aristotle, *Politics*, II.5.1264b.10–15: 'quod autem necessarium ipsi facere eosdem principes, manifestum; non enim quandoque quidem aliis, quandoque autem aliis mixtum est animalibus a deo aurum, sed semper eisdem: ait autem hiis quidem mox genitis miscere aurum, hiis autem argentum, aes autem et ferrum artificibus futuris et agricolis.' Aristotle is referring to Plato, *Republic*, 414–15.

⁴³ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.1. See also IV.7.2, 5, citing Aristotle, *Ethics*, v.1.1130a.1–2. Tolomeo misread the part about metals, IV.7.1, but this did not affect his argument on this point.

⁴⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 18, pp. 38–39: 'illi, qui habent dominium plus vident in natura entis quam private persone, quia gerunt vices quasi totius entis, cui presunt, unde merentur divinos honores [...]. Hoc etiam apparet in modernis principibus viris catholicis et ecclesiasticis, quod ex speciali divina influentia super eos ex ampliori participatione entis singularem habent virtutem super populum egritudine laborantem, ut sunt reges Francie, dominus noster rex Karolus, et de rege Anglie fertur.'

but rather a cause for humanely exercising governance over the people.’⁴⁵ Though Tolomeo justifies the ruler’s authority, he does not elevate him over his fellow citizens — his equals — except by virtue of his authority. This is precisely the conception of authority within the Dominican order and in Aristotle’s polity. Tolomeo intended this depiction of the ruler to apply to all civil officials: ‘Therefore, the multitude of those who exercise lordship takes its origin in the same way, from the one who exercises governance, which is God.’⁴⁶

Likewise, in the ‘argument from motion’, *De iurisdictione imperii* states: ‘Since in exercising governance lords are the movers of the world, therefore it is necessary that the motion of their government be reduced to God just as the first mover.’⁴⁷ Once again *De regimine principum* reduces the rulers’ status: ‘Kings, rulers, and all who have precedence are among those persons who possess reason for movement to a greater degree than others, whether they exercise governance, judge, defend, or engage in other acts pertaining to the responsibility of government.’⁴⁸

It is only in the ‘argument from ends’ that the positions in the two works were similar, viz., that since the end of humans is the most noble end, rulers promoting it participate more in the divine.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, *De regimine principum* goes on to equate this divinity with the common good and to elaborate the role of the leader in tending his flock, something absent from *De iurisdictione imperii*. Thus Tolomeo turned even this initially common treatment into a statement of Aristotelian principles and used these principles to justify his conclusions.

This transformation of Tolomeo’s attitude toward kingship can also be seen in the way the two treatises understood the Israelite kings. The earlier work is not consistently positive toward kingship, in fact, it presents the first Hebrew king in the context of the early period of rule in the world, which was characterized by tyrants:

⁴⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.1.2: ‘Omne ens ex ente primo dependet, eadem et dominium, quia ipsum super ens fundatur et tanto super nobilius ens quanto ad dominandum super homines in natura coaequales eisdem praeponitur. Unde et causam habet non superbiendi, sed humane suum populum gubernandi.’

⁴⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.1.3: ‘Ergo eodem modo et multitudo dominantium ab uno dominante trahit originem, quod est Deus.’

⁴⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 19, p. 39: ‘Cum ergo domini in gubernando sint motores orbis, ergo oportet motum sui regiminis in Deum sicut in primum motorem reducere.’

⁴⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.2.1: ‘Inter omnes autem homines qui plus habent de ratione motus, sunt reges et principes et omnes qui praesunt, sive in gubernando sive in iudicando sive in defendendo et sic de aliis actibus qui ad curam regiminis pertinent.’

⁴⁹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 20, pp. 41–42; *De regimine principum*, III.3.

All ancient lords and monarchs perished from a dire death, as we can learn from the histories, so that God might show through this that he detested their tyrannical ambition. Hence it is that concerning the first king of the children of Israel, namely Saul constituted through Samuel to their petition, it is found that he was made king as it were with the displeasure of God, on account of which it is said in 1 Kings 8 [7], when the children of Israel asked for a king, it was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel and then God said to him: 'Hear the voice of the people in this, what they say, for they do not reject you, but me, as king over them', wanting to show through this that to want to exercise lordship is a certain usurpation of divine government and a flight from divine subjection, and therefore lordship is criticized.⁵⁰

However, in the very next chapter Tolomeo provides an Augustinian justification of all rule:

And although the ambition of lords was odious to God, whence also they worthily deserved to be deposed, nevertheless their government, to refrain the evil of inordinate humans, to preserve each in its own justice, to dispose cities in concord, lordship was permitted and provided by God, permitted for the punishing of the evil, provided for the governance of the good. Hence it is that the apostle says Romans 13 [1]: 'There is no power but from God', from which word indeed it is sufficiently manifest that all lordship comes from God.⁵¹

This halfhearted approval of the Hebrew kings does not correspond with the generally elevated view of kingship in *De iurisdictione imperii*, and can be attributed not to Tolomeo's understanding of the essence of kingship itself, but to his belief in the chaotic situation of early post-lapsarian history when strong but unprincipled and evil men seized power. Once God allowed kingship, however reluctantly, among his Chosen People, these kings were expected to follow the lofty model of God himself, which is reflected in Tolomeo's admiring comments

⁵⁰ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, p. 38: 'Omnes antiqui domini et monarche dira morte interierunt, sicut ex hystoriis haberi potest, ut per hoc Deus ostenderet se eorum ambitionem tyrannicam detestari, Hinc est, quod de primo rege filiorum Israel, videlicet Saul, constituto per Samuelem ad eorum petitionem, invenitur, factus quasi in displicentia Dei, propter quod in primo Regum chap. 8 dicitur, cum peterent filii Israel regem, displicuit in oculis Samuelis et tunc dixit Deuseidem: "Audi vocem populi in hiis, que loquuntur, non enim te abiecerunt, sed me, ne regnem super eos," per hoc volens ostendere, quod velle dominari est quedam usurpatione divini regiminis et fuga divine subiectionis et ideo dominium reprehenditur.'

⁵¹ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 18, p. 38: 'Et quamvis dominorum ambitio Deo esset odiosa, unde et digne merebantur deprimi, eorum tamen regimen, tum ad refrenandam inordinatorum hominum malitiam, tum ad conservandum unumquemque in sua iustitia, tum ad disponendum cives in concordia, premissum est a Deo dominium et provisum, permissum ad punitionem malorum, provisum ad gubernationem bonorum. Hinc est, quod apostolus dicit Rom. 13: "None est potestas nisi ad Deo".'

on kingship. For this reason, the priest was to institute and anoint the Hebrew kings, judging them on the basis of their virtue, but once anointed they were elevated above other humans, 'because they stand in the place as it were of all being, to which they are in charge, whence they deserve divine and double honours, as Augustine says'. Saul experienced the spirit of prophecy, and Solomon was given divine wisdom.⁵² Their primary duty was to increase the divine cult, as did Solomon with his temple, for which he was 'magnified above all kings of the earth and all the earth desired to hear his wisdom', and as a result his kingdom prospered.⁵³ This did not mean that they could not do bad things, as Solomon himself did in later years, and if kings were bad their kingdoms would suffer, but when they were evil they were not acting as true kings.

After Tolomeo developed his negative view of kingship, he had difficulty in treating Hebrew kingship coherently. In *De regimine principum*, he repeats some of the things just mentioned about the role of the king after anointing, and his responsibility to seek and use divine wisdom, but he was constantly coming up against the conflict between Aristotle's view, which had become so much more central to his thought, and that of Augustine. This made his effort to develop a consistent biblical view of kingship especially tense. This manifests itself most dramatically in his interpretation of two biblical passages in Deuteronomy that presents dramatically divergent portraits of the king. In the first, Moses, in the voice of God, prescribes the form that Israelite kingship would take:

[Moses] ordains the king for the utility of his subjects, which, as Aristotle tells us, is characteristic of kings. 'When a king has been constituted', Moses says, 'he will not multiply horses for himself, nor, being puffed up by the size of his cavalry, lead the people back into Egypt. He will not have many wives who will attract his spirit, nor an immense amount of silver or gold.' This book also tells us how he wanted the king to understand this: 'he will copy this law of Deuteronomy for himself [...] and he will keep it with him and read it all the days of his life, so that he might learn to fear the Lord his God and guard his words and ceremonies', so that he can direct the people according to divine law. So also King Solomon at the beginning of his government asked God for wisdom to direct his lordship for the utility of his subjects, as is written in III Kings. Moses added in Deuteronomy: 'Let his heart not be lifted overflowing over his brothers, nor incline to the right or the left, so that he and his son may reign for a long time over Israel.'⁵⁴

⁵² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 4, p. 11: 'quia gerunt vices quasi totius entis, cui presunt, unde merentur divinos honores et duplicatos, ut dicit Augustinus'.

⁵³ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 4, 11: 'Magnificatus est rex Salomon super omnes reges terre et universa terra desiderabat audire sapientiam eius'.

⁵⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.11.1, citing Aristotle, *Ethics*, VIII.10.1160b.1–3 (the same point is made in the *Politics*, III.7.1279a.32), Deuteronomy 17.16–19, III Kings (I Kings) 3. 9, and

In contrast, the second treats the future king as a tyrant and the choice of kingship an inferior one that takes away the benefits of political government:

The people had petitioned Samuel for a king, since he was in his declining years and his sons were not exercising just lordship in a political mode, as the other judges of this people had done. When Samuel consulted the Lord, he answered: 'Hear the voice of the people in those things which they say [...]. But call them to witness and preach the law of a king to them: [...] "He will take away your sons and put them in his chariots and he will make for himself chariots and horsemen and those to run before his teams of horse [...] and appoint plowmen for his fields and reapers for his crops and forgers for his arms; he will also make your daughters into maids, perfumers, and bakers of bread."' I Kings also relates other conditions that pertain to servitude, with the intention of showing that political government, which Samuel's government and that of the other judges had been, was more fruitful to the people.⁵⁵

Thomas Aquinas had not commented on the Mosaic precepts. Had he done so he most likely would have interpreted them as Moses' prediction of the way the mixed constitutional kingship he had begun would develop in the future. But Tolomeo strongly denies the legitimacy of Samuel's king: 'That right was not given to the king by divine institution, rather it was foretold that kings would usurp that right by framing unjust laws and by degenerating into tyrants who

Deuteronomy 17. 20: 'In Deut. per Moysen aliter in I Reg. per Samuelem prophetam: uterque tamen in persona Dei differenter ordinat regem ad utilitatem subditorum, quod est proprium regum, ut philosophus tradit in octavo Ethic.: cum, inquit, constitutus fuerit rex, non multiplicabit sibi equos, nec reducet populum in Aegyptum, equitatus numero sublevatus. Non habebit uxores plurimas quae alliciant animam eius, neque argenti aut auri immensa pondera (quod quidem qualiter habeat intelligi, supra traditur in hoc libro): describetque sibi Deuteronomium legis huius, et habebit secum legetque illud omnibus diebus vitae suae, ut discat timere dominum Deum suum, et custodire verba eius et caeremonias, et ut videlicet possit populum dirigere secundum legem divinam. Unde et rex Salomon in principio sui regiminis hanc sapientiam a Deo petivit, ad directionem sui regiminis pro utilitate subditorum, sicut scribitur in III Lib. Reg. Subdit vero dictus Moyses in eodem libro: nec eleuetur cor eius in superfluum super fratres suos, neque declinet in partem dexteram vel sinistram, ut longo tempore regnet ipse et filius eius super Israel.'

⁵⁵ *De regimine principum*, II.9.2, citing I Kings (I Samuel) 8. 7–17: 'Cum enim petivissent regem a Samuele iam aetate defecto, et filiis suis non iuste dominantibus modo politico ut iudices alii dicti populi fecerant, consulto domino respondit: audi, inquit, vocem populi in his quae loquuntur. Verumtamen contestare eos et praedic eis ius regis. Filios vestros tollet et ponet in curribus suis, facietque sibi currus et equites et praecursores quadrigarum suarum, et constituet aratores agrorum suorum et messorum segetum ac fabros armorum suorum; filias quoque vestras faciet sibi focarias, unguentarias ac panificas, et sic de aliis conditionibus ad servitutem pertinentibus, quae in I Lib. Reg. traduntur, per hoc quasi volens ostendere quod regimen politicum, quod erat iudicum et suum fuerat, fructuosius erat populo.' The quotation is an abridgment of 7–13.

preyed on their subjects.’ In contrast, Tolomeo never doubted that both passages described true kings, so he could not accept that Samuel’s warnings were mere predictions of how far the kings would stray from their duties.⁵⁶ Moses and Samuel passed on two very different collections of regal laws, according to Tolomeo, yet as prophets they both uttered their words ‘in the persona of God’; the difference corresponds to Aristotle’s distinction of regal and despotic rule:

Samuel says that the laws which he hands down are regal, although they are utterly despotic. Aristotle in *Ethics*, Book VIII, agrees more with the first set of laws [...]. From which [Aristotle’s comments on kingship] it is sufficiently manifest that according to that the despotic [mode] is much different from the regal, as the same Philosopher seems to say in *Politics*, Book I [...]. A kingdom does not exist on account of the king, but the king on account of the kingdom, since for this God has provided for kings that they should guide and govern their kingdom and preserve everyone in their own rights, and this is the end of rule. But if they do otherwise, by turning everything to their convenience, they are not kings but tyrants [...]. The common good is said by Aristotle in *Ethics*, Book I, to be a divine good, so that just as God who is the ‘King of Kings and Lord of Lords’, by whose virtue rulers command [...] guides and governs us not for himself but for our well-being, so should kings and other dominators in the world do [...]. A legitimate king ought to guide and govern thus, according to the form handed down in Deuteronomy.⁵⁷

How can we explain the difference when both sections of the Bible describe ‘regal laws’, and the kings foretold were established and anointed by God in the person of his prophet? Tolomeo’s answer follows the circular path that recurs often in his

⁵⁶ *De regimine principum*, II.9.2, III.11.1; Deuteronomy 17. 14–20; I Kings 8. 11–18; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I.2.105.1.ad 5: ‘Illud ius non dabatur regi ex institutione divina; sed magis praenuntiatur usurpatio regum, qui sibi ius iniquum constituunt in tyrannidem degenerantes, et subditos depraedantes.’

⁵⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.11.1–4: ‘Et primo quidem in sacra Scriptura aliter leges regalis dominii traduntur in Deuteronomium per Moysen aliter in I Regibus per Samuelem prophetam, uterque tamen in persona Dei. In Deuteronomium enim ordinat regem ad utilitatem subditorum quod est proprium regum, ut Philosophus tradit [...] Samuel leges quas tradit, cum sint penitus despoticae, dicit esse regales. Philosophus autem in VIII Ethicorum magis concordat cum primis legibus [...]. Ex quibus omnibus satis est manifestum, quod iuxta istum modum despoticum multum differat a regali, ut idem Philosophus videtur dicere in I Politica [...] regnum non est propter regem, sed rex propter regnum, quia ad hoc Deus providit de eis ut regnum regant et gubernent et unumquemque in suo jure conservent, et hic est finis regiminis; quod si aliud faciunt in se ipsos commodum retorquendo, non sunt reges sed tyranni [...] bonum commune dicitur a Philosopho in I Ethicorum esse bonum divinum, ut sicut Deus qui est “Rex regum et Dominus Dominantium,” cujus virtute principes imperant [...] nos regit et gubernat non propter se ipsum sed propter nostram salutem, ita ut reges faciant et alii dominantes in orbe [...]. legitimum regem secundum formam in Deuteronomio traditam sic debere regere et gubernare.’

writing. He begins confidently with an Aristotelian distinction between regal and despotic rule, with the latter sometimes being necessary, but then Augustinian ideas bring him back to the conclusion that the two cannot be separated. In Deuteronomy, Tolomeo says, God established a king for the common benefit, the proper function of any legitimate ruler (though, remember, this is not how *De iurisdictione imperii* defines good kingship). In contrast, the king of I Kings was concerned only with his own well-being, making him a tyrant and despot. God approved this despotism because the Jews were ungrateful for what they had and failed to understand the benefits of good government. In such a case tyranny becomes expedient for divine justice and harsh rule was necessary. Tolomeo claimed that Aristotle and Augustine agreed about this, but this is a half-truth. Both did justify oppressive rule in certain cases, but they had different reasons for approving it and understood regal and despotic rule differently. Aristotle supported some despots because he believed that natural slaves were incapable of self-government, but that, unlike tyranny, despotism benefits the governed. For Augustine all rule is from God, who often supports a tyrannical rule for the forcible repression of a naturally sinful humanity. Since all government is a form of servitude, there was really no theoretical difference for Augustine among the different forms that would make one inherently preferable to the others.

They did agree that it was the people's nature that legitimized despotism. For Aristotle, deformed nature was characteristic only of some people, but for Augustine it was basic to all humanity. Tolomeo tried to have it both ways by blurring the difference between two incompatible types of sin: the original sin of Adam and Eve and the particular sins of certain peoples. He states that despotic government is reduced to regal by original sin, but almost immediately adds that in certain 'ill-tempered regions despotic rule is necessary for kings'. The first statement implies that although regal and despotic rule have different natures in themselves, in post-lapsarian times kings rule despotically. This is what was meant by the one form being 'reduced' to the other. The second qualifies this conclusion and suggests that some peoples may be sufficiently virtuous to escape servitude. Tolomeo uses actual examples of non-despotic government in the Bible, in Aristotle, and in later history as illustrations of this possibility. Ultimately he replaces original sin with local and contingent sin, and in so doing implicitly rejects the standard Christian-Augustinian theory of government by misrepresenting it. Tolomeo's resolution of the kingship problem is flawed and contradictory, but it is one of his most original contributions.

The nature of society in the Garden of Eden imposed severe obstacles to making Augustine an Aristotelian. If humans are naturally political animals, as Aristotle wrote, government must have existed there; if government came about

only as a result of sin, as Augustine thought, it should not. If it is sin that made regal government despotic, can non-despotic regal government exist in the real world? If Tolomeo were to stick with strict Augustinian theory the answer would have to be no. And since, according to Augustine, there was no government before sin, good kingship could only exist in the realm of Platonic ideas.

Tolomeo tried to have it both ways. He begins by arguing that Aristotle, the Bible, and Augustine all agree that the first humans naturally possessed lordship over the lower species and that the rule of human over human existed in Eden in a non-coercive sense of deliberating about and directing human activity. He justifies this with Aristotle's view of humans as social and political animals and Aquinas's principle that any society must be ordered and have something directing it. Such an order implies inequality and lordship, even if in Paradise there was no natural superiority. Thus, he concludes, 'the lordship of human over human is natural, lordship exists even among the Angels, it existed in the First State, and it exists even now.'

Adam and Eve were initially without sin, so there was not even a place for ideal regal government in Eden:

Political government is placed ahead of royal government for two reasons. First, if we refer lordship to the integral state of human nature, called the State of Innocence, in which there was political, not regal lordship, there was no lordship then that involved servitude, but rather preeminence and subjection existed according to the merits of each for disposing and governing the multitude, so that whether in influencing or receiving influence each was disposed proportionately according to its own nature.⁵⁸

Despite his disclaimer that it was sin that converted regal rule to despotic, it is clear that Tolomeo thought of regal rule as invariably implying servitude — it would have been servitude even in Eden. It forms an essential part of the nature of the form itself, not of the character of the ruler or the ruled.

A common medieval argument for kings derived from the idea that since laws are universal statements they cannot effectively address every particular situation. A regal king, restricted only by reason, could best handle changing circumstances. Tolomeo made this point as well, but before the Fall this problem did not exist.

⁵⁸ *De regimine principum*, II.9.4: 'Ex duplici parte regimen politicum regali praeponitur. Primo quidem, si referamus dominium ad statum integrum humanae naturae, qui status innocentiae appellatur, in quo non fuisset regale regimine sed politicum, eo quod tunc non fuisset dominium quod servitutem haberet, sed praeeminentiam et subiectionem in disponendo et gubernando multitudinem secundum merita cujuscumque, ut sic vel in influendo vel in recipiendo influentiam quilibet esset dispositus secundum congruentiam suae naturae.'

In its natural state everything acted according to natural law, and therefore the law could not fail in particulars. This is what Tolomeo meant when he wrote that 'each was disposed proportionately according to its own nature'. Not only would a regal ruler have imposed servitude in Paradise, there would not have been the normal compensatory benefits.

How was government changed by sin? Tolomeo agreed with Augustine that sin is the cause of servitude, but not to the extent of saying that political authority is by its very nature servitude. If sin made servitude necessary, how could any group of sinful human beings escape it? If not, how did the Fall affect human government? Tolomeo may not have given satisfactory answers, but he unambiguously asserts that fallen humans may aspire to the virtue necessary for a paradisiacal type of government free from servitude and that this government would be political, since regal rule necessarily involves servitude.

Tolomeo cites at least one group of people who had already achieved these aspirations — the pagan Romans. To defend this position he had to twist the views of Augustine, Aristotle, and the Bible to base an Aristotelian polity comparable to that of the Garden of Eden on secular virtue alone. 'Therefore', he writes, 'political government was better for wise and virtuous persons, such as the ancient Romans, since it imitated this state of nature.' Original sin has become a sin like any other that people of sufficiently good character could overcome through secular virtue. Tolomeo attempted to equate true virtue, which for Augustine could be nothing less than harmony with God, with the political virtue of people living in the best community. For Augustine the perfect City of God was a mystical community of the saved that existed unchanged in eternity, never institutionalized on earth or by human agency. But Tolomeo's polity, when properly constructed, could be like the City of God in its harmony, virtue, felicity, and permanence. Though the product of time-bound and imperfect humans, the internal harmony of this polity ensured that it could not decay, since there would be no contradictions to cause its collapse. This attitude anticipated Renaissance ideas of the possibility of permanence for time-bound republics,⁵⁹ and Girolamo Savonarola later used Tolomeo's ideas and Augustine's *City of God* explicitly in his theory of millenarian republicanism.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Theory and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 74–80 and passim, where it is suggested that this idea was original to the Renaissance.

⁶⁰ See Donald Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 290, 293, 304, 309.

What of Samuel's king? All Tolomeo's reasoning led him to conclude that this despotic rule is the natural form for kingship, irrespective of original sin. So he had to accept Samuel's king as a legitimate king, and his 'regal laws' as God's will for controlling a wicked people unsuited for good rule, that is, political rule. Though the lack of virtue was partially a result of the ingratitude of the Israelite people, it also emerged from their very nature — they were 'stiff-necked' and so deserved such laws.⁶¹ This only created a new problem — there now is no place in the real or Platonic world for the beneficent king of Aristotle and Deuteronomy. If a people is virtuous, it deserves and is best served by a political government. If it lacks virtue it can only be restrained by the rigours of regal rule, but because of that people's sinful nature, regal rule is inevitably despotic. That this is so is confirmed by Tolomeo's discussion of the political rule of the judges among the Jews: 'Samuel', he writes, 'said to them when he wanted to show that his government had been political and not regal [...] "speak of me in the presence of the Lord and his Christ and say whether I have taken anyone's cow or ass, whether I have slandered anyone, whether I have oppressed anyone, whether I have accepted a gift from anyone's hands,"' which, Tolomeo adds, 'those who have royal lordship do'.⁶²

Tolomeo was not simply using the term *regal* loosely, sometimes in the technical sense of one ruling without any laws, which he condemned, and sometimes as a synonym for king, who could be good. He was simply incapable of finding any place for the good regal ruler that Aristotle and most medieval writers insisted was the embodiment of the best government. This is proved by his failure to attach the 'regal laws' of Deuteronomy to any actual or hypothetical kings. He did not, for example, follow Aquinas and identify Moses as a king. And when he encountered in Aristotle an official called 'king' in a polity of which he approved, he interpreted his rule as aristocratic, that is, political, and not monarchical. None of

⁶¹ *De regimine principum*, III.11.9. Note that this is the opposite of Thomas's position. For him the defects of the Jews made political rule the only workable form; when it was abandoned tyranny resulted. For Tolomeo the same defects made tyranny inevitable and desirable.

⁶² *De regimine principum*, II.8.2: 'Samuel qui dictum populum certis iudicavit temporibus, sic ait ad ipsos, volens ostendere suum regimen fuisse politicum, et non regale quod elegerant: "loquimini," inquit, "de me coram domino et Christo eius, utrum bovem cuiusquam tulerim aut asinum, si quempiam calumniatus sum, si oppressi aliquem, si de manu alicuius munus accepi"; quod quidem qui regale dominium habent non faciunt.' The 'non' may make it seem that Tolomeo was saying that kings did not do this, but he meant that kings do not act as Samuel did, as the context and reference to I Kings (unquoted here) proves. In the Greek, 'Christ' means simply 'anointed', but obviously medievals saw this as a special word.

his distinctions could save Tolomeo from his underlying belief that regal and despotic rule are essentially the same. He could not accommodate the virtuous king working for the common good either to the Augustinian insistence on corrupt humanity or to his own belief that at least some peoples can overcome their corruption. This, finally, is why he said that regal and despotic governments can be reduced to each other.

Had he been willing to follow up on this thought, Tolomeo could have insisted that since all kingship is despotic, every people should work for its overthrow and the establishment of a political government under the control of the whole people. This would have made him the earliest of the radical Aristotelian proponents of republicanism. What is more, the same arguments could just as easily be applied to the papacy. Medieval writers often wrote analogously of church and state government, and certainly we would expect Tolomeo to think that if any people were virtuous, or at least could aspire to virtue, it would be the Christian people. This last possibility did not even occur to him, since it was obvious to him that the papacy was established by God himself on the model of his own rule in the universe. God as king is another factor that made it difficult for him to reject kingship absolutely, since it was a commonplace that art imitates nature and also that the earthly should imitate the heavenly. And the fact is that, as a practical matter, he did little to discourage monarchy in the secular world either. True, after much equivocation, Tolomeo in theory discounted the role of original sin in the transformation of regal into despotic government. Original sin became a necessary but not sufficient condition for servitude and coercion. But, in practice, this seemingly liberating revision of Augustinian doctrine rendered political rule by a virtuous people the exception to the rule, something we could expect only rarely; Tolomeo was not a republican *per se*. Original sin predisposed people to sin and to despotic rule — which they could transcend only through virtue. The Fall, far from changing the nature of regal rule, created the rationale for its existence and its justification for most peoples. As Tolomeo writes: ‘But because “the perverse are corrected with difficulty and the number of fools is infinite”, as is said in Ecclesiastes, in corrupt nature regal government is more fruitful, because it is necessary for human nature to be disposed in such a way to, as it were, restrain its flux within limits [...]. In this respect regal lordship excels.’⁶³

⁶³ *De regimine principum*, II.9.5: ‘Sed quia perversi difficile corriguntur, et stultorum infinitus est numerus, ut dicitur in Eccle., in natura corrupta regimen regale est fructuosius, quia oportet ipsam naturam humanam sic dispositam quasi ad sui fluxum limitibus refrænare [...]. Ergo quantum ad hoc excellit regale dominium.’

Not every people could even aspire to virtue. There are many uncontrollable contingencies that may make despotic rule more appropriate. Aristotle believed that the degenerate nature of barbarians from a hot climate condemns them to oppressive government, that peoples of the cold north live freely but without political capacity, and that only the Greeks had political ability.⁶⁴ In *De regimine principum*, Tolomeo uses a similar argument to explain the despotic tendencies of some peoples, although he more commonly substitutes astrological signs for climate, or gives no specific reason for the character flaw or advantage of the people. Though he cites Aristotle, he does not mention the climate factor, saying simply, 'When Aristotle distinguishes the types of kingdoms, he also shows that among certain barbarous nations regal lordship is altogether despotic, because otherwise they could not be governed', and, later, that the type of government should be suited to the nature of the particular people.⁶⁵ As I have mentioned before, Tolomeo's authority for what determines the nature of peoples was not Aristotle, but Ptolemy, the second-century CE Alexandrian astronomer and geographer.

For this reason, for governments to succeed they must adapt themselves to the nature of the people, and attempts to force an inappropriate form are doomed to failure or at least the exercise of the form must be modified in order to survive. At a basic level some regions are suited to freedom, others to servitude; some peoples are virile, while others are servile. It is hard to dominate the first kind of people, who demand political rule and resent any authority over themselves, whereas the second kind are incapable of self-government and must be ruled despotically with an iron hand.

Tolomeo's main example of the first kind is the Italians, in whose lands government was often the best because political rule was the standard form. An attempt to install another kind of government there would mean either that otherwise monarchical rulers like counts⁶⁶ or those with lifetime office, like the doge of Venice, would have to rule in a temperate manner similar to that of political rule, or else the ruler would have to become a harsh tyrant in order to keep power:

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, VII.7; cf. I.2, where he calls barbarians a 'community of slaves', and III.14, where he says barbarians were more servile than Greeks, and Asiatics than Europeans.

⁶⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.11.9, IV.8.3, citing Aristotle, *Politics*, III.14.1285a.16–29 and IV.1.1288b.20–34: 'Philosophus etiam in tertio Politic., ubi distinguit genera regni, ostendit apud quasdam barbaras nationes regale dominium esse omnino despoticum, quia aliter regi non possent.'

⁶⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.22.6.

Such lordship [political] is especially strong in Italy, where, for the reason mentioned, the inhabitants were always less able to be subjected than others, so that if you should want to bring them under despotic rule, this could not be done unless the lords tyrannized. This is why the islands in the region, which always had kings and princes, such as Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, always had tyrants. And in parts of Liguria, Aemilia, and Flaminia, which today is called Lombardy, no one could have rule for life except by the path of tyranny. The exception is the doge [duke] of Venice, but he has a temperate government.⁶⁷

As for the second kind of region:

Sometimes when a people does not know the benefit of a good government it is expedient to exercise tyranny over it, because even tyrannies are the instruments of divine justice. For this reason, certain islands and provinces, according to what the histories relate, always had tyrants on account of the evil of the people, because they could not be governed otherwise than with an iron rod. In such ill-tempered regions, despotic rule is necessary for kings, not according to the nature of regal lordship, but according to the merits and pertinacity of the subjects, and this is the reason Augustine gives.⁶⁸

As specific examples he gives Sardinia, Corsica, 'certain Greek islands', Sicily, and Cyprus.⁶⁹ Cyprus is especially interesting, since *De regimine principum* began as an advice manual for the King of Cyprus. Tolomeo's evaluation of that island's government was doubtless different from what Thomas Aquinas's would have been had he finished his treatise after 1286 when King Henry II subdued the

⁶⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.4: 'Tale autem dominium maxime in Italia viget: unde minus subiucibiles fuerunt semper propter dictam causam. Quod si velis trahere ad despoticum principatum, hoc esse non potest nisi domini tyrannizent: unde partes insulares eiusdem, quae semper habuerunt reges et principes, ut Sicilia, Sardinia et Corsica, semper habuerunt tyrannos. In partibus autem Liguriae, Aemiliae et Flaminiae, quae hodie Lombardia vocatur, nullus principatum habere potest perpetuum, nisi per viam tyrannicam, duce Venetiarum excepto, qui tamen temperatum habet regimen.'

⁶⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.11.9, citing Augustine, *City of God*, XIX.15: 'Interdum enim dum populus non cognoscit beneficium boni regiminis, expedit exercere tyrannides, quia etiam hae sunt instrumentum divinae iustitiae: unde et quaedam insulae et provinciae, secundum quod historiae narrant, semper habent tyrannos propter malitiam populi, quia aliter, nisi in virga ferrea, regi non possunt. In talibus ergo regionibus sic dyscolis necessarius est regibus principatus despoticus, non quidem iuxta naturam regalis domini, sed secundum merita et pertinacias subditorum. Et ista est ratio Augustini in praedicto iam libro.' See also III.22.6. Nederman, 'Imperfect Regimes', p. 542, cites this passage and points out that Aristotle was careful to distinguish the barbarian governments from tyranny. Tolomeo could not easily do the same thing, since he had trouble distinguishing tyranny from despotism, as indicated by this passage, which switches back and forth from tyranny to despotism, but his point was essentially the same, that oppressive government was necessary for some peoples.

⁶⁹ *De regimine principum*, III.22.6.

aristocratic party and established a firm monarchy. For Thomas this development would have been welcome, since it provided peace and security without tyranny. But for Tolomeo, with his new understanding of regal government and his understanding of the Cypriot nature, it *was* a tyranny, and he saw the development as the inevitable triumph of harsh government in a region suited to it.

When it came to his native Italy, where he believed there was an inherent desire for freedom, or cities anywhere, Tolomeo was a champion of republicanism, though he sidestepped the question of how citizens could overcome original sin. But in most places for most peoples and for large kingdoms, he favoured regal rule. This was not an afterthought justifying the status quo; it was basic to his theory of sin. Only the exceptional community blessed with a favourable climate, a fortunate configuration of stars, and great virtue could profit from political rule. Others needed the rigour that only regal rule could provide.

Implicit in Tolomeo's formulation of government is Pierre d'Auvergne's distinction between a bestial and non-bestial multitude. There were three attitudes toward popular participation that were significant in medieval thought. First, Aristotle taught that humans were political animals who needed to participate in government in order to complete their natures.⁷⁰ This principle begs the question of whether popular participation benefited government, but it gave the multitude a claim to a part of rule by distributive justice and by the principle that nature does nothing in vain. It also suggests that their participation would be positive. Second, Thomas Aquinas discounted the capacity of the multitude, but believed that it should have a role in order to make each person feel a part of the polity and thus minimize dissent.⁷¹ Finally, Pierre d'Auvergne, in his continuation of Thomas's *In octo libros politicarum Aristotelis expositio* and elsewhere, developed the idea of bestial and non-bestial multitudes. The former is perverse and incapable of contributing to good government; it, therefore, can have no right to rule. But since a non-bestial multitude can contribute, it does have this right.⁷² Pierre's distinction provided a justification for participation at the cost of any absolute right to participation. This suggests a connection between sin and the form of a

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1253a1–2.

⁷¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I–II.2.105.2.

⁷² Pierre d'Auvergne, *In octo libros politicorum Aristotelis expositio*; Book III.7–8 of Thomas Aquinas, *In octo libros politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. by R. M. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1966), III.9, pp. 435, 438; *Questiones super Politicum*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 16,089, 3.q.15 (fols 295^{rb}–95^{ra}), 3.q.16 (fol. 295^{vb}). Aristotle, *Politics*, III.11.1282a, casually introduces the terminology of the bestial multitude, but does not develop its implications.

regime. Once stated this principle must have seemed obvious, for allowing the perverse to govern would almost guarantee an undesirable result. These ideas informed almost all later medieval discussions, whether or not Pierre's terminology, which became commonplace, was used. It is even possible to reconcile his view with the purely Aristotelian one by saying, as Marsilius of Padua implied, that the perverse are perverse in that their nature has been deformed. It is likely that this idea influenced Pierre's choice of the word *bestial*, for if the multitude were like lower creatures its members would lack the uniquely human quality of being political animals.

The idea that the best government can be determined only by considering the particular circumstances, including the nature of the people, became more common in fourteenth-century political thought. Ewart Lewis, who believed that it was always a primary characteristic of medieval Aristotelian political thought, calls this approach 'expediency', but to avoid confusion with the later idea of 'Reason of State', I previously called it 'relativism'.⁷³ That word has many connotations, so that more recently I decided, at the suggestion of James Hankins, to use 'circumstantialism' instead.⁷⁴ The concept should not be taken to imply that the form of government is completely open, since writers who used it retained an absolute measure of success: the regime's fulfilment of the common good. One consequence of this shift in orientation and the several different interpretations of circumstantialism was that political theorists felt compelled to observe local and contingent conditions more carefully and develop a greater historical sense than was typical of earlier medieval writers.

To some extent circumstantialism, as Lewis argues, derived directly from the *Politics*, which contends that contingencies such as climate, temperament, local custom, the nature and quality of a given people, and even astrological influences might affect best or possible regimes. Most scholastic authors accepted these factors to some extent, and this I think is the origin of Lewis's conviction, though many still insisted on one form or another as best in all or most situations. But a new direction appeared around the turn of the fourteenth century. Instead of simply making a gesture of respect toward Aristotle's circumstantialistic

⁷³ Ewart Lewis, 'Natural Law and Expediency in Medieval Political Theory', *Ethics*, 50 (1939–40), 144–63; Blythe, *Ideal Government*, pp. 165–79.

⁷⁴ I take the term from Harold J. Johnson, 'Ethical Relativism and Self-Determination: Political Theory in Aquinas and Some Others', in *L'homme et sons univers au moyen âge*, ed. by Christian Wenin, Actes du septième congrès international de philosophie médiévale, 2 vols (Louvain-la-Neuve: Éditions de l'Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1986), II, 835–44.

statements, some authors now embraced them wholeheartedly and insisted on the contingency of political organization.

Tolomeo, among others, argued for different governments being suitable for polities of different sizes: political rule for cities and monarchy for kingdoms or provinces;⁷⁵ in fact, he writes that 'cities live politically in all regions, whether in Germany, Scythia, or Gaul, although they may be circumscribed by the might of the king or emperor to whom they are bound by established laws'.⁷⁶ His view reflects a common tendency of medieval political thought to combine a guiding overall monarchy with local self-government. This can be seen quite clearly in Dante's fervent imperialism and equally fervent republicanism or in Tolomeo's advocacy of papal monarchy combined with political rule in cities and republican rule among the virtuous. It also reflected the views circulating among the political class in the northern Italian cities; as early as 1264, for example, the statutes of Vicenza declared that kings naturally ruled nations, counts and the like provinces, and elected magistrates cities.⁷⁷ This attitude can help to explain some of the contradictions in Tolomeo's accounts of the Roman Empire. For Roman lawyers, such as Bartolo da Sassoferrato, a hierarchical schema of this type was the only way to preserve some vestige of the imperial ideal. In Italy the idea seemed natural to some, as a way to supervise the factionalism and violence that pervaded the northern city-states from the thirteenth century on, and it survived throughout the Renaissance. But the same idea often surfaced in northern Europe.

Although Tolomeo acknowledged that each form of government had its place, it is clear that a republican form is the only one he considered to be good in any pure sense, and he supported it strongly whenever it was possible. His objection was simply that it was not possible in many or most situations. It was also the only natural form for him and the form that of necessity existed according to natural reason before the Fall.⁷⁸ There no one could argue, as one could later on, that a regal king, restricted only by reason, could best handle changing circumstances.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.1.

⁷⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.5: 'Considerandum etiam quod in omnibus regionibus, sive in Germania sive in Scythia sive in Gallia, civitates politice vivunt sed circumscripta potentia regis sive imperatoris, cui sub certis legibus sunt astricti.'

⁷⁷ *Stat. Vicenza*, 1, as cited in Philip Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 352.

⁷⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.9.6, II.9.4; *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, p. 36.

⁷⁹ *De regimine principum*, II.9.5.

Since everything in Paradise acted according to natural law, the law was sufficient for any contingency.

Tolomeo went beyond Aquinas in three significant areas: his development of a natural basis for political rule, his advocacy of political rule as the absolutely best form, and his rejection of regal rule in the Aristotelian sense of the good rule of one person over a free people. Stating them out of context, without qualification, could lead one to conclude that Tolomeo was radically opposed to monarchy. Tolomeo's recognition of the inseparability of servitude from regal rule has been mistaken for a rejection of nonpolitical rule and a more consistent Aristotelianism than that of Aquinas, whereas Tolomeo actually believed that servitude was best for most people. The various modern scholars who have seized either on Tolomeo's circumstantialism, such as Dunbabin and the Carlyles, or emphasized his commitment to political rule, like Davis, who attacked the Carlyles for 'glossing over Tolomeo's republicanism by saying that he showed indifference in choosing between regal and political rule', all presented an unbalanced picture of his thought. The truth lies between these two positions.⁸⁰ Tolomeo's ideas could be used to express radical republican values more easily than those of other contemporary thinkers, but in themselves they were not inherently more radical. It was their revolutionary potential that makes Tolomeo the most interesting political theorist of his time. For those not bound by Tolomeo's uneasy synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine, there would be no reason to tolerate an inherently despotic king or even a pope. Tolomeo's answer, that most people are incapable of self-rule, would not impress all who were drawn to the hostility toward monarchy that he was the first to show.

⁸⁰ Jean Dunbabin, 'Aristotle in the Schools', in *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, ed. by Beryl Smalley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), pp. 65–85 (p. 73); R. W. and A. J. Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1903–36), v, 72; Davis, 'Roman Patriotism', p. 413.

THE CITY, THE CITIZEN, AND THE POLITY AS ORGANISM

Almost everything in the previous chapter applies as much to a large kingdom as to a city. In *De regimine principum*, for the first and only time, Tolomeo directs his primary attention to the unique aspects of city life. His return to Lucca in the 1280s as prior of San Romano and his later move to Florence as prior of Santa Maria Novella in the turbulent years 1301–02, when he probably wrote *De regimine principum*, undoubtedly renewed his civic feelings. Also at work was his increasing reliance on Aristotle, for whom the city-state was the fundamental unit. Aristotle's orientation created difficulties for most medieval writers, who were committed and used to large monarchies. Their attempts to reconcile the two models usually feel forced. Typically, they claimed that while a city was sufficient for human life, a kingdom was more sufficient. This argument completely distorted Aristotle, for whom the city was the perfect community, from which expansion could only detract. It also resulted in an almost necessary defence of monarchy.¹ With his urban background, Tolomeo found Aristotle's conception suitable, and, although he accepted larger states as legitimate, he never defended, or even mentioned, Aquinas's position that a province fulfilled needs better than a city.²

On the contrary, in *De regimine principum* Tolomeo frequently asserts the superiority of the city and city government. When Aquinas used a locution like

¹ See Jean Dunbabin, 'Government', in *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 477–529 (p. 481).

² Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.2.4. Dunbabin wrongly attributes this extension of sufficiency to the later Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*, III.1.5.243r.

‘city or province’, as he usually did, one gets the feeling that he included ‘city’ merely because Aristotle’s usage made it inescapable, and that he really would have preferred to write only of large monarchies. With Tolomeo it is almost the reverse; sometimes he seems to be writing about monarchies only because of the undeniable fact of their existence, as in the transitional Book III, where he often refers to a ‘city or kingdom’. In Book IV, which is devoted to political rule, he usually writes of the city alone. At the beginning of Book IV (Chapters 2 and 3), Tolomeo revisits the naturalness of human society, which Thomas had already addressed in Book I. Since political rule is ‘the government characteristic of cities’, he felt that he needed to demonstrate their necessary existence, which Thomas did not specifically do. In his opinion, it was the city and not any other human community or community in general (which was the subject of Thomas’s comments) that nature demanded. There may be reasons to form larger states, Tolomeo writes elsewhere, but they are not natural or necessary in the same sense that a city is.

Aristotle stated that meeting physical needs was mostly the function of the family, which provided for daily needs, and the village, which provided for needs beyond the daily. ‘Coming into being for the sake of living’, the city added something to material security, but it was then transformed into the agent of a higher purpose, existing ‘for the sake of living well’. This did not mean turning citizens into consumers, but rather directing them toward the life of virtue.³ Tolomeo, while agreeing formally, and even extending virtue to include both civic and religious virtue, and ultimately salvation itself, puts far more emphasis than Aristotle on the city’s contribution to material needs.⁴ In his exposition he gives it equal weight, devoting one chapter to each of the essential ends of the city: the physical (the bodily or sensitive virtues) and the rational (virtue in a more modern sense, comprising reason and will). At the end, he concludes: ‘It is clear that humans must of necessity live in a multitude, whether we consider their bodies, their sensitive parts, or their rational natures, and this implies that the construction of the city is necessary by nature. For this reason, Aristotle says that all naturally incline to such a community as exists in the community of a city.’⁵

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1252b.27–30.

⁴ For a discussion of these ideas, see Cary Nederman, ‘Mechanics and Citizens: The Reception of the Aristotelian Idea of Citizenship in Late Medieval Europe’, *Vivarium*, 40 (2002), 75–102 (pp. 89–93).

⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.2–3. The quotation is from IV.3.12: ‘Patet igitur hominem sive ex parte corporis, sive parte sensitivae, sive considerata sua rationali nature, necesse habere vivere

Tolomeo strengthened his position and minimized his difference with Aristotle by saying little about the distinction between smaller communities and cities that Aristotle had stressed; throughout his chapter on the material necessity of the city he considers the enumeration of needs that individual humans cannot meet on their own — defence, clothing, learning about harmful and useful things, medicine — sufficient justification for the city. At the end he mentions towns and villages, only to stress their inferiority to the city in terms of the varieties of occupations and skills that the city could provide:

For all these reasons I conclude that the city is a necessity for human beings, and that it is constituted on behalf of the community of the multitude, without which humans can not live decently. To the extent that a city is greater than a town or village, there will be more arts and artisans present there to assure the sufficiency of human life, and it is from these that the city is constituted. Augustine defined it in this way, that the city 'is a multitude of human beings bound together by one chain of society'.⁶

It is clear that right from the beginning Tolomeo is also grounding the city in the entire body of inhabitants, or at least the productive majority of it, the multitude, whose variety of products and services provides for the material ends of the city. This variety is in fact the very definition of the city. When Aristotle wrote that associations exist for promoting a specific good, and that the city is the most complete association in promoting the good life, he was quite consciously excluding the common people — workers, artisans, and businesspeople, not to mention slaves, women, and children — those 'mechanics' without either the time or the capacity to develop into virtuous citizens.⁷ Tolomeo's adaptation would have baffled him, but it was quite natural for a middle-class citizen of a commercial republic, who was proud of its industry and the great variety of goods and services there, and especially of the prosperity its businesspeople brought, and somewhat contemptuous of the lack of amenities in rural areas, to read Aristotle this way.

in multitudine; ex qua parte necessaria est secundum naturam constructio civitatis. Unde Philosophus dicit in 1 Politicorum quod natura quidem omnibus inest ad talem communitatem, qualis est civitatis communitas.' The reference is to Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1252b.30f.

⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.8: 'Ex quibus omnibus concluditur, civitatem esse necessariam homini constituendam propter communitatem multitudinis, sine qua homo vivere decenter non potest: et tanto magis de civitate quam de castro, vel quacumque villa, quanto in ea plures sunt artes et artifices ad sufficientiam humanae vitae, ex quibus civitas constituitur. Sic enim Augustinus definit eam in primo de Civ. Dei quod est multitudo hominum in uno societatis vinculo colligata.'

⁷ Tolomeo's divergence with Aristotle is one of the arguments of Nederman, 'Mechanics'.

In this Tolomeo reflected the re-evaluation of the value of work in the later Middle Ages, as Cary Nederman has argued. This occurred not only in the Italian cities, but also in northern writers with minimal or no knowledge of Aristotle's political work such as the twelfth-century Hugh of St Victor and John of Salisbury. But it was only in Italy that the argument developed in a way similar to Tolomeo's, which made artisans not only necessary and valuable parts of the city but also the focus of the polity. This point of view was shared, for example, by Brunetto Latini, writing in the early 1260s, under the influence of Aristotle's *Ethics* but before the *Politics* was generally available. For me, but not for Nederman in his analysis of Latini, 'the guild-based structure of public life' does seem sufficient to explain his (and Tolomeo's) presentation of the diversity of arts as 'a critical foundation for communal life',⁸ and this presupposition in turn sufficiently explains Tolomeo's misreading or distortion of Aristotle's *Politics* on this point.

Tolomeo's desire to centre cities in nature must have been one of the reasons that caused him to initiate a discussion of their necessary existence, but it is not the reason he gives. He writes that although Book I (i.e., Aquinas's part) proved the naturalness of society — not restricted to cities — that book was concerned with a society's relationship to its ruler, whereas he would look at the inter-relationship and dependency of the various human groups in the city. Although not specifically mentioning Tolomeo, Maurizio Viroli points to this very change in focus as one of the key differences in the format of political treatises before and after the assimilation of Aristotle's *Politics*.⁹ We have already seen an interest in the parts of the community before the 1260s, but what we have not seen is much analysis of the connection between this and the best government, or even much awareness of varieties of government as a relevant subject. Certainly the reception of Aristotle had much to do with this, regardless of whether medieval writers interpreted him correctly. It is because political rule best promotes the virtue and material fulfilment of all these groups, Tolomeo writes, that it is the form normally found everywhere in cities, whether or not the city was incorporated into a larger state with a different mode of government.¹⁰ Tolomeo defines political rule as 'the lordship of many'. He includes aristocracy in the definition, but

⁸ Nederman, 'Mechanics', pp. 80–89.

⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.9. Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 33–34.

¹⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.2, 5.

believed that it most properly coincided with Aristotle's form of 'polity'.¹¹ By degrading monarchy to the equivalent of despotism, and focusing on the political government of cities, Tolomeo, for the first time in medieval political thought, employed a methodology derived from Aristotle — albeit reinterpreted in his own way, deriving conclusions not totally in accord with Aristotle's, and relying on some non-Aristotelian ideas already circulating — for analysing civic political ideas and institutions.

Tolomeo's use of the organic metaphor, a theme present both in Aristotle and earlier medieval writing, reveals his concern with the components of a city. Tilman Struve argues that in *De regimine principum* Tolomeo combined Aristotle, Augustine, and the medieval organological tradition exemplified by John of Salisbury. Tolomeo, he argues, seems mostly to have used the latter for identifying specific organs with state parts, and he contrasts the hierarchical ordering of parts in John's *Policraticus* with Tolomeo's combination of the Aristotelian emphasis on promoting happiness by reducing multiplicity to unity and the Augustinian concept of a state creating a bond of harmony.¹² Cary Nederman, on the other hand, minimizes John's orientation toward subordination of the parts and stresses his emphasis on the joint effort and value of all the classes, including workers and artisans, toward the good of the community, as well as the similarity of Tolomeo to John in this regard.¹³ Nederman's second point is well taken, but this does not negate the subordination present in John's model. Political rule is thus not a necessary consequence of a recognition of the contribution of all parts of a city, but understanding Tolomeo's communal emphasis will help us to put his analysis of particular polities and his conception of citizen in their proper context.

Neither Nederman nor Struve note that Tolomeo's mature use of body imagery evolved from a view he held previously that did not focus on the mutual working of the parts of a society. Instead, in *De iurisdictione imperii* he tends to employ a more traditional conception of the body metaphor to support the hierarchical organization of society and the church. On two occasions, citing Aristotle's *De animalibus*, Tolomeo points to the heart as the source of movement, in analogy to the monarch in society. The first instance comes when he is formulating an argument that he intends to refute, viz. that just as the heart precedes and gives motion to the body, so too the emperor, since he preceded the

¹¹ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.2.

¹² Tilman Struve, *Die Entwicklung der organologischen Staatsauffassung im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1978), pp. 166–67.

¹³ Nederman, 'Mechanics', pp. 83–84, 90–91.

pope historically and donated temporal lordship to him, does not need his confirmation.¹⁴ Second, in refuting other opposing arguments, he brings together two potentially conflicting analogies concerning the heart and soul: All things 'are reduced to one first principle [...]. This is clear in humankind, in which all motion is from the soul mediated by the heart, which is the beginning of all natural motion in the body.'¹⁵ As mentioned above, he also argues that the soul rules the body, using it as a tool, and comes close to identifying the pope with the Platonic world-soul.¹⁶ In *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo never repudiates the identification of emperor with heart, but simply subjugates him to the pope as soul. He goes on to answer the question of priority of rule without specifically resolving the analogy, but implies that the soul is the formal cause of the body while the heart is the efficient cause.¹⁷ In all these cases, however, Tolomeo's emphasis is on hierarchy in both church and society. Further, he does not cite John of Salisbury in his early writing, even though this would have been appropriate, which suggests that he was not yet familiar with the *Policraticus*.

In contrast, in *De regimine principum* Tolomeo consistently uses the bodily analogy to depict the harmonious workings of the parts of a good state. In *De iurisdictione imperii* there is only one instance of this viewpoint, and it too is directed to the support of hierarchy. Tolomeo argues that the mutually ordained parts of human society, like bodily members, need a single directing principle.¹⁸ The works have different purposes, but the substantial difference between them resulted from Tolomeo's emphasis on the city and greater reliance on the *Politics* in *De regimine principum*, as well as by his presumed reading of John of Salisbury in the interim. Most importantly, the *Politics* enabled him to formulate ideas of non-monarchical government that he was not able to express clearly earlier.

¹⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 2, p. 6.

¹⁵ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 15, pp. 33–34: 'omnia reducuntur ad unum primum principium [...]. Hoc patet in homine in quo omnis motus est ab anima mediante corde, quod est principium omnis motus naturalis in corpore.'

¹⁶ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 7, p. 19: 'Adaptari posset ad summum pontificem, quod sit anima mundi, a quo est omnis motus et sensus et spiritualis operatio vite.' For the body as the instrument of the soul, see Aristotle, *De anima*, I.3; *Ethics*, VII.9, 10; Tolomeo cites Plato, *Timaeus*, and Augustine, *Retractiones*, I.5.3, for the world soul.

¹⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, p. 37. Tolomeo here also refers to Nimrod's building of the Tower of Babel as the ambition of the heart to be preminent, causing God [as soul] to be angry.

¹⁸ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 17, p. 36.

While the description of society in terms of the interaction of its parts was perfectly suited to the support of monarchy, it could more easily be adapted to a defence of the superiority of political rule and an expanded citizenry than could the alternate conception. In an important article, Cary Nederman presents the variety of uses to which the organic metaphor was put in the later Middle Ages. He argues that most modern scholarship, by restricting itself to several well-known figures and distorting the views of one of them, Marsilius of Padua, tended to ignore this variety and portray medieval usage as monolithic and invariably oriented toward monarchy. His point is good, if overstated, since for example both Struve (whom I disagree with on several points) and I have described Tolomeo's different approach. Nederman includes Tolomeo in his list of the canonical figures regularly called on to defend a stable medieval usage of the metaphor, which is puzzling, especially since in an earlier article to which I will return, he presents Tolomeo in a very different way.¹⁹ The difference, perhaps, is that in the later article Nederman describes what he calls an 'egalitarian' approach to the metaphor and focuses on organological antipapal thought, which characterizes all of his few fourteenth-century examples. Tolomeo did not fit here, of course, but the egalitarian quotation from Marsilius of Padua written two decades later that Nederman cites could easily have come from his *De regimine principum*: 'Just as an animal well disposed according to nature will be composed of given proportionate parts ordered reciprocally, each communicating its works to the others and to the whole, so the city (*civitas*) is constituted in such fashion when it is well disposed and instituted according to reason'.²⁰

With regard to secular society, Tolomeo in *De regimine principum* rejects John of Salisbury's, Thomas's, and his own earlier position and no longer identifies the dominant organ with a single lord.²¹ John had associated the head with the secular

¹⁹ Cary Nederman, 'Body Politics: The Diversification of Organic Metaphors in the Later Middle Ages', *Pensiero politico medievale*, 2 (2004), 59–87 (pp. 59–60), citing Blythe, 'Aristotle's Politics', pp. 126–31. One good example of modern distortion that Nederman does not cite is Paul Archambault, 'The Analogy of the "Body" in Renaissance Political Literature', *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, 29 (1967), 21–53, who, in a survey of medieval contributions to the analogy, seems almost purposely to skip over Tolomeo's part of *De regimine principum* and perversely distort Marsilius of Padua in order to support his thesis about a uniform Thomist monarchical usage informing Renaissance thought.

²⁰ Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor pacis*, 1.2.3, cited by Nederman, 'Body Politics', p. 64.

²¹ Struve, *Entwicklung*, pp. 170–71.

ruler, subject to his own will alone, and the soul with those directing religion,²² and Thomas had written that having one king is best in analogy with the body which is moved by the heart,²³ and that the king is like the spirit in the body or God in the world.²⁴ Tolomeo retains the pope as soul from *De iurisdictione imperii* but deviates in his conception of the state.

Tolomeo begins with Aristotle's *Politics* to establish the body analogy: 'Human beings constitute a kingdom just as walls a home and members the human body, as Aristotle says.'²⁵ As in the body, members of society are naturally suited to perform different functions.²⁶ Tolomeo's emphasis is always on the functional differentiation of the body politic and the harmonious workings of its members, although the varying quality of the parts required that some degree of hierarchy remain. In an extended passage he relates this to all the sources mentioned in order to portray the optimal city, in contrast to all the defective ones that Aristotle had described:

A city, as Augustine says [...] 'is a multitude of human beings bound together by some chain of society, which is rendered blessed through true virtue'. This definition does not clash with Aristotle's opinion, which places political felicity in the perfect government of the polity [...]. The true and perfect polity is like the well-disposed body, in which the organic strengths have perfect vigour. If the supreme virtue, which is reason, directs other inferior potencies and they are moved by its command, then a certain pleasantness and perfect pleasure of strengths arises in both, and this we call harmony [...]. The philosopher Plutarch was motivated to compare the republic or polity to a natural and organic body, in which motions depend on the movement of one or two parts, such as the heart and brain, and yet every part of the body has a proper function corresponding to the first motions and assisting in the ministry of the others [...]. Therefore, in a true civility or polity it is required that the members be conformed to the head and not mutually discordant [...]. We see that there is a necessary mutual proportion among them with

²² John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v.2, v.6. A single ruler could unite the two functions, like Augustus as Pontifex Maximus.

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.3.4. At I.1.7 he says that the heart or head is principle among the members of the body.

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.13.3, I.14.1.

²⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.1.1.4: 'regnum ex hominibus constituitur sicut domus parietibus et corpus humanum ex membris, ut Philosophus dicit'. The citation is from Aristotle, *Politics*, III.1.1274b.39, although Aristotle there only mentions that 'the polity is a certain order of those inhabiting the city', and does not make the other analogies. In *Politics*, v.3.1302b34–03a1, Aristotle writes, 'just as the body is composed of parts and it is necessary that they grow proportionately [...] and if not it is corrupted [...] thus also the city is composed of parts'.

²⁶ *De regimine principum*, II.10.4, citing Aristotle, *Politics*, I.6.1255a–b.

regard to their influence, since the inferior are moved according to the motion of the superior [...]. Therefore, to live politically makes life perfect and happy [...]. There are various ranks in a polity, with respect to the execution of offices as well as to the subjection or obedience of the subjects, so that there is a perfect social congregation when all are properly disposed and operate properly in their own states. Just as a building is stable when its parts are well laid down, so also a polity has firmness and perpetuity when all, whether rectors, officials, or subjects, work properly in their own ranks [...] there will be the greatest pleasantness and perpetual firmness of state, which is characteristic of political felicity, as Aristotle tells us.²⁷

In this passage, Tolomeo both elaborates the organic analogy and constructs a poetical paean to the virtuous polity. In his unusual phrasing of the metaphor, individuals serve as parts of the body, and their strengths are the virtues that flow through and bind together the whole body. As with the members, the virtues themselves exist within a hierarchy in which the highest virtues correspond to heart and brain. Though people in a city necessarily have different roles and

²⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.23.1–4: “Civitas autem,” ut Augustinus dicit [...] “est hominum multitudo aliquo societatis vinculo colligata, quae vera virtute beata redditur.” Haec autem definitio a sententia Philosophi non discordat, quae [qui in Matthis] in perfecto politiae regimine felicitatem ponit politicam [...]. Sic enim de vera et perfecta politia contingit quemadmodum de corpore bene disposito, in quo vires organicae sunt in perfecto vigore. Et si virtus suprema quae est ratio caeteras dirigat inferiores potentias et ad suum moveantur imperium, tunc insurgit quaedam suavitas et perfecta delectatio virium in alterutrum, quam harmoniam vocamus [...]. Et ex hac quidem ratione motus fuit Plutarchus [this word does not appear in Matthis] philosophus assimilare rempublicam seu politiam naturali et organico corpori, in quo sunt motus dependentes ex uno movente, sive ex duobus, ut sunt cor et cerebrum; et tamen in qualibet parte corporis est operatio propria primis motibus correspondens et in alterutrum subministrans [...]. Ad veram igitur civilitatem sive politiam requiritur, ut membra sint conformia capiti et ad invicem non discordent [...] videmus quod est debita proportio ipsorum ad invicem quantum ad influentiam quia inferiora moventur secundum superiorem motum [...]. Ergo sic politice vivere perfectam et felicem vitam facit [...]. habemus diversum gradum in politia, tam in executione officiorum, quam in subiectione, sive obedientia subditorum: unde tunc est perfecta socialis congregatio, quando quilibet in suo statu debitam habet dispositionem et operationem. Sicut enim aedificium est stabile, quando partes eius sunt bene sitae, sic de politia contingit quod firmitatem habet et perpetuitatem quando quilibet in suo gradu, sive rector sive officialis sive subditus, debite operatur [...] ibi erit summa suavitas et perpetua firmitas status: et hoc est proprium felicitatis politicae, ut Philosophus tradit.’ The citations are from Augustine, *City of God*, XV.8, II.21, XIX.3; Aristotle, *Ethics*, I.9.1099b.30f. If the word ‘Plutarch’ (as noted it does not appear in all editions) was intended, the reference is to (Pseudo)-Plutarch, ‘The Instruction of Trajan’, as contained within John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v.2, v.9, VI.20. Tolomeo’s explicit references to *Policraticus*, especially in chapters near this one (IV.24.3, IV.24.5, and IV.25.7, and also II.7.7) are usually in the context of the body. However, Aristotle, ‘the Philosopher’, would also be appropriate.

abilities, they are united by Augustine's 'chain of society', identified with 'the love shared by its citizens'.²⁸ Love expresses the spirit of the political body, and, Tolomeo argues, specifically to demonstrate how members with different characteristics can unite in society, 'Union is more perfect in an animate body if the virtue of the spirit is diffused to the various organs having various functions united in the one substance of the spirit, as is apparent in animate bodies that have the sense of touch alone, such as worms.'²⁹ Reason is the prime virtue directing the whole in this almost mystical secular body, an analogy that occurred to Tolomeo as well, in the sentence that immediately follows the passage on diffusion just cited: 'For this same reason, Paul compares the mystical body, that is, the Church, to a true and natural body having various members with various potencies and virtues, but all having their roots in the one principle of the spirit'. Properly disposed according to Aristotelian principles, the polity experiences full health and thereby achieves transcendent stability, harmony, and happiness.

Likewise, Tolomeo compares any disturbance in the polity to sickness, which entails a fundamental breakdown of harmony and thus of virtue. Extreme examples of this are the governments that came into existence immediately after the Fall. These were particularly brutal, since humans crippled by sin were not yet able to redirect themselves to virtue and arrange the parts of the polity in a rational order. Yet Tolomeo maintains his belief in the power of reason and the virtue of love to prevail in the end. Rectors make laws, not so much as in Augustine to repress sin, as to begin the healing process in the body politic and to establish and maintain a harmonious ordering of parts.³⁰

Struve perceives a progression in medieval thought under Aristotelian influence from the use of body imagery as a simile by which writers pointed to the likeness of the body and society, to the conception of society as an actual organism.

²⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.9, IV.3.10, IV.4.3. Augustine allows for them being joined by any common object of love, even a despicable one, but Tolomeo assumes it was the virtue of love itself.

²⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.8: 'Perfectior est unio in corpore animato si in diversis organis virtus animae diffundatur ad diversas operationes unitas in una substantia animae, sicut apparet in animatis quae habent solum sensum tactus ut sunt vermes'; citing Aristotle, *On the Spirit*, III.1.425a.9–10, III.11.1.434a.1. This agrees with Città del Vaticano Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Vat. lat. 810, an early fourteenth-century edition of *De regimine principum*, but the Matthis edition has 'sicut apparet tam in animatis perfectis, quam in animatis quae habent solum sensum tactus ut sunt vermes'.

³⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.23.4, IV.11.2.

Roberto Lambertini cogently criticizes this schema as excessively linear,³¹ but it works to a limited degree within Tolomeo's writings, if not for medieval writings as a whole. As Lambertini demonstrates, the use of this imagery was not a consequence of a uniform and exact theory of correlations between the body and society, as Struve maintains, but rather of the general belief that art imitates nature.³² Thus it fit into the same general category as macrocosm/microcosm parallels and could be used in a wide variety of ways.

Except for the intrusion of the idea of sin (which is only one of the loci of illness in Tolomeo), all this is remarkably similar to the views of Marsilius of Padua as Cary Nederman interprets them. Marsilius cites the same organological passages from Aristotle to develop a medical model of the polity, whose good health is assured by the harmonious workings of its various parts, but which may fall into sickness through lack of balance of the parts.

If 'Plutarch', is the correct reading in the long passage above, Tolomeo's reference is to the part of *Policraticus* that John of Salisbury attributed to Plutarch but probably wrote himself, which compares the ruler to the head (not the brain) and an advisory senate to the heart.³³ For John, the single and virtually absolute ruler is the true head, even if, in deference to its wisdom, policy must go before the Senate. In contrast, when Tolomeo uses the head or heart imagery for secular rule in *De regimine principum* he always applies it to whatever constitutes the ruling group. For example, when he writes of the many political rectors in city government, he calls them collectively 'the head of the civil corporation on which the whole body depends'.³⁴ Here his usage is obvious, but even earlier, in the books not specifically devoted to political rule, he uses the word *lord* in a general sense. For example, he writes that ministers must be conformed to lords like members to the head, but illustrates this principle by noting that in Italy bureaucrats act like political rectors, that is, the normal kind of lord there.³⁵

³¹ Roberto Lambertini, 'Il cuore e l'anima della città: Osservazione a margine sull'uso di metafore organistiche in testi politici bassomedievali', in *Anima e corpo nella cultura medievale*, ed. by C. Casagrande and S. Vecchio (Florence: SISMEL, 1999), pp. 289–303 (pp. 292–93).

³² Lambertini, 'Il cuore e l'anima', p. 294. Lambertini (p. 296) cites Tolomeo only for his use of body/soul imagery in both treatises, in *De regimine principum* defending the papal party in the polemical literature in the church/state conflict around 1300.

³³ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v.2. He also mentions the Senate in v.9.

³⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.11.5: 'rectores [...] sint caput universitatis civilis ex quo totum corpus dependet'.

³⁵ *De regimine principum*, II.10.2.

Since heart and brain (or head) both refer to the ruling part, why did Tolomeo use both? In part, because of their presence in *Policraticus*, and more importantly in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle says that the heart or brain, like a house's foundation, is an imminent part, from which a person, like a house, begins.³⁶ Since the ultimate goal is the harmony of the organism, any other part could be sacrificed to preserve this foundation: 'We amputate a hand so that the heart and brain, in which a human being principally consists, might be preserved.'³⁷ Tolomeo is not trying to present a model for diffused power, since he always says that any multiplicity must be unified through a directing power (though this could be many individuals or institutions). Rather he reflects medieval physiological uncertainty as to the motive bodily organ and the seat of reason.

Given Tolomeo's conception of development in a polity, his insistence on the mortality of (almost) every polity, and his frequent use of the organic metaphor, it is somewhat surprising that Tolomeo never used what Nicolai Rubinstein calls a dynamic model of the political body, that is, one that envisioned the polity in various stages of life from infancy through senescence and death. This formulation became common in the Renaissance, and Rubinstein found an early example of it in Tolomeo's contemporary, Albertino Mussato (1261–1329).³⁸

Tolomeo's conception of citizenship in *De regimine principum* arose naturally from his organic conception of society. Aristotle defines a citizen as 'one to whom pertains the power of participating in rule either consultatively or juridically'.³⁹ The early commentators on the *Politics* dutifully paraphrased this, but had difficulty applying it to monarchies — indeed they did not really try, except occasionally to extend the notion of participation to minimal involvement, to elide the distinction between inhabitant and citizen, or to distinguish different meanings of the word *citizen*. One common distinction was between citizens, 'simply speak-

³⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, v.1.1013a.5–6.

³⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.1.1.6: 'Amputamus enim manum ut conservetur cor et cerebrum in quibus principaliter hominis vita consistit.' Elsewhere (*De regimine principum*, IV.25.7) he follows John of Salisbury in identifying the hand with warriors, which, Tolomeo notes, Aristotle called the 'organ of organs', although here he meant to speak more generally. The citations are to John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, v.2, 6.1 and Aristotle, *De anima*, III.8.

³⁸ Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Some Ideas on Municipal Progress and Decline in the Italy of the Communes', in *Fritz Saxl Memorial Essays*, ed. by D. J. Gordon (London: Nelson, 1957), pp. 165–83 (p. 174).

³⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, III.1.1275b19–21: 'Quis quidem igitur sit civis, ex hiis manifestum, cui enim potestas communicandi principatu consiliativo vel iudicativo.'

ing', who participated, and citizens *secundum quid*, who comprised the remainder of the inhabitants.⁴⁰ Aristotle himself, despite his precise definition of citizen that excluded most inhabitants even in his most widely based polity, was not always careful in his usage and sometimes referred to any native inhabitant of a city as a citizen.

With his preference for political government Tolomeo did not have to rationalize the nonparticipation of all but a tiny elite and with his emphasis on the intrinsic value of everyone he was predisposed to a broad definition of citizen. Defending republican cities with a large participatory base, Tolomeo would have had fewer problems with the strict meaning in any case, and envisioning universal functional involvement, whether through a direct role in the institutional government or through working in an occupation for the common good, he was concerned with the governmental fostering of virtue in all inhabitants through its actions and not just in its citizens in Aristotle's strict sense. Unlike Aristotle, he often refers indifferently to 'subject' or 'citizen', regardless of the form of government,⁴¹ suggesting that for him the categories of subject and ruler were not disjoint, and were at most two vantage points for looking at the functioning of a polity. In this way he tended to take Aristotle's 'participation' in the widest sense, usually ignoring Aristotle's limitation of it to consultative and judicial functions. This is one example of how his understanding of the nature of the city put him in direct, though possibly unconscious, opposition to Aristotle.

It might seem a small step from a broad understanding of citizenship to a defence of almost any government, but Tolomeo's concept of 'citizen' was actually more restrictive than it seems at first. He normally uses 'citizen' only for an inhabitant of a city ruled politically, suggesting that he did not believe that true citizenship could exist under another governmental mode and that the participation he had in mind had to be something more than purely functional. Even in *De iurisdictione imperii*, where he seems to be unaware of Aristotle's definition, his two uses of the word refer to the Roman Republic and to Christ's

⁴⁰ See Mario Grignaschi, 'La Definition du "civis" dans la scholastique', *Anciens pays et assemblées d'États*, 35 (1966), 70–100.

⁴¹ Although it is not true, as Cary Nederman writes in 'From Moral Virtue to Material Benefit: *Dominium* and Citizenship in Late Medieval Europe', in *Cultivating Citizens: Soulcraft and Citizenship in Contemporary America*, ed. by Dwight D. Allman and Michael D. Beatty (New York: Lexington, 2003), pp. 43–60 (p. 46), 'Ptolemy leaves aside the language of citizenship that pervades Aristotle's *Politics*; whether living under political or royal regimes, in cities or in territorial kingdoms, inhabitants are consistently "subjects".'

Kingdom,⁴² never to the Roman Empire. Tolomeo's other treatises on the Roman Empire do not contain the word. Although *De operibus sex dierum* presumes kingship, the one use of 'citizen' comes when Tolomeo is trying to explain Aristotle's statement that 'the intellective appetite rises above or predominates over the sensitive appetite with a political rule', and illustrates this with the situation of a king who ruled citizens not totally subject to him, as opposed to despotic rule of lord to servant, a situation that Thomas Aquinas and Tolomeo in his early writing would have described as political rule.⁴³ In *De regimine principum*, forty-four out of fifty-one usages occur in Book IV, which is devoted to political rule. Of the other uses, three are completely generic and do not refer to government at all, one refers to government in the abstract, and two refer to political rule. The only problematic reference is to Roman kings ruling over Roman citizens.⁴⁴ Although these kings would not appear to be political, at one point Tolomeo says that they were,⁴⁵ and, in any case, he could have slipped because he was so accustomed to referring to citizens under the Roman Republic. Most likely Tolomeo, as a citizen of Lucca, had an early apprehension of a citizen as a member of a political community, and as his understanding of Aristotle's *Politics* matured and his interpretation of it developed, he extended the term to its full meaning in his thought. At the same time he was concluding that all kingship was despotic and that political rule was not compatible with kingship, so that he was left with only aristocracy and polity as possible loci of citizenship.

In *De regimine principum* Tolomeo associates 'all' in a city with participation and citizenship:

They were elevated to the government of the people with the consent of all counsel, as today is common in Italian cities. The name 'city' implies this, which, according to Augustine [...] is, 'a multitude of humans bound together by some chain of society', so that a city is, as it were, a unity of citizens. Therefore, since the name 'city' includes all citizens, it indeed seems reasonable that it ought to search for its government from the separate kinds of citizens, since the merits of individuals are necessary for the state of civil government.⁴⁶

⁴² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 24, p. 46, chap. 28, p. 58.

⁴³ *De operibus sex dierum*, XIII.19, pp. 192–93.

⁴⁴ *De regimine principum*, II.9.6.

⁴⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.5.

⁴⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.18.3: 'consensu totius consilii assumpti ad regimen populi fieret, ut hodie communiter faciunt civitates Italiae. Sic enim civitatis nomen importat, quae est secundum Augustinum [...] hominum multitudo aliquo societatis vinculo colligata, unde civitas

From this passage alone, it is not obvious that Tolomeo meant to include all inhabitants. After all, the Italian cities did not, and the separate kinds of citizens could as easily refer to the nobles, *popolo grasso*, and *popolo minuto*. Most of the passages about citizenship refer specifically to the professions of the *popolo* or farmers, and the latter term could refer to landowners. In arguing for universal military service of able-bodied male 'citizens', for example, Tolomeo specifically names artisans and farmers.⁴⁷ And although he is rarely this explicit, he regularly employs the quotation from Augustine on the chain of society in various references to artisans and other professions on the one hand and citizens on the other. It is still possible that he meant to exclude the unemployed and possibly the lower workers such as servants and day labourers, but his interchangeable use of the words *subject* and *citizens* suggests that on the contrary he really did mean 'all'. Nevertheless, I think it likely that when Tolomeo wrote of the citizen he was thinking mainly of the *popolo*. In his organic metaphor he envisioned all inhabitants working productively together, and in that sense they were citizens in a limited sense, but he never envisioned the lower orders having any real role. It is not so much that he consciously excluded them but that, like most members of a ruling class, he never thought much about them as individuals at all.

Tolomeo's interpretation of citizen is close to the way a medieval or modern reader, given their political milieus, might misunderstand Aristotle, with 'consultative' construed to include election or consent and the citizen class expanded beyond Aristotle's functional definition. This is the only way we can understand Tolomeo's insistence that most Italian cities in his time followed the model of universal citizenship, or for that matter, Americans now believing that all are equal citizens. But unlike Aristotle, Tolomeo believed that all have the right to participate since they share a bond and are required for the city to function properly, and this only happens when all participate in a way proportionate to their merits.⁴⁸ From the underclasses, someone like Tolomeo would have envisioned little of merit indeed.

Tolomeo also shared with Sallust to some degree the idea that virtue develops through exercising it and being challenged by civic participation. The virtue of

quasi civium unitas. Cum ergo nomen civitatis omnes cives includat, rationabile quidem videtur ad regimen eius de singulis generibus civium debere requiri, prout exigunt merita singulorum ad civilis regiminis statum.' The citation is actually to Augustine, *City of God*, XV.8. Tolomeo was writing about the election of Spartan kings.

⁴⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.11.7.

⁴⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.7.7.

citizens that most medieval political writers praised is a rather static thing; virtue is needed for participation, but it does not necessarily wither without participation nor increase with it. But Tolomeo suggests that there is a progression in virtue: 'Subjects of a political government develop confidence from being released from the lordship of kings and from exercising lordship themselves at suitable times, and this makes them bold in pursuing liberty.'⁴⁹ Although geographical factors may make certain regions more suited to republican rule than others, in those places where it is possible, participation in civic affairs has a beneficial effect on the citizens, which means on the population as a whole.

Although Tolomeo never directly addresses Aristotle's definition of citizen, it appears that he was in fair formal agreement with it, even in the sense that all in his expanded citizen body are potential officials, even though such a role would rarely, if ever, accrue to someone of the lower classes. The only qualification is that Tolomeo would also include as participation a range of activities that Aristotle would not. This formal agreement with Aristotle obscures one significant difference, analysed by Cary Nederman and mentioned above in reference to the re-evaluation of the value of work. Aristotle showed contempt for the working and artisan classes, excluding their members from citizenship in his best polity on several grounds, but especially because they lacked the time to develop the civil and moral virtue necessary to the polity. While necessary to a city they were not suitable to be a proper part of it. Various medieval writers followed him on this, including to a degree Thomas Aquinas, who gave a minimal role to everyone in the best polity for stability, but shared Aristotle's disdain for the labouring classes and their abilities. Tolomeo included them not only for stability and because of their value as producers, but because he felt that their contribution was valuable to the city in other ways. Military service was one example, specifically in contrast to Aristotle's view. As citizens they shared the competence of choosing effective officials. And they potentially, if not normally, contributed governmental officials from their ranks. As for the connection between leisure and virtue, Tolomeo says little. He does sometimes say that leisure is necessary for philosophy or for letters, and argues that paupers who are always desperate for things would spurn virtue, but he associates virtue with the activities of farming, trading, and production and assumes that those so engaged would have sufficient goods to lead a virtuous life and contribute to the political life of the city. And the dangers of paupers as

⁴⁹ *De regimine principum*, II.8.5. Compare the similar passage from Book I.5 about the flourishing of the Roman Republic after the expulsion of the kings, which possibly was Tolomeo's interpolation.

rectors could be alleviated by paying them salaries.⁵⁰ So at most Tolomeo felt the lack of leisure was a problem only for the unemployed or the lower segment of workers, and he did not exclude even them in any absolute sense.

With all this in mind, let us see how Tolomeo responded to the particular examples of city government found in the *Politics* and other historical governments. No medieval political treatise other than *De regimine principum* discusses the examples from the *Politics* in any detail, although every formal commentary on the *Politics* had at least to paraphrase what Aristotle said. Tolomeo's treatment comes where we would expect it, in Book IV after he has established the principles of political rule, but his greater interest in political government is shown by the fact that he carries on no similar discussion in Books II or III of the examples of monarchy given in the *Politics*.

Aristotle, at the beginning of Book II of the *Politics*, explains that every polity that he knew of had been defective in some way, so his discussion of the various polities was necessary to bring out what had been beneficial in them and what had not. By the very nature of a political community, he believed, all who constitute it share some or all things, at the very least the constitutional arrangement, and he arranges his discussion around the degree of sharing and then around the institutional structure of each polity.⁵¹ Tolomeo follows this arrangement but is also much concerned with whether the parts which constituted the different polities were well enough chosen to assure their harmonious functioning. Since I have already discussed his general views on the latter topic, I will not dwell on it here. Above all, he believed, all cities need the five divisions mentioned by Plato: rectors, councilors, warriors, artisans, and farmers.⁵²

What particularly sets Tolomeo's approach apart from that of other medieval political writers is that having defended the necessity of the city, and the desirability of political rule, he does not proceed from a priori principles to determine the best constitutional arrangement. Rather, like Aristotle, he starts by discussing the various types of community with a view to understanding how the things they shared and their constitutions affected the governments built on them.⁵³ In this way he connects Aristotle's approach with Augustine's definition of a city united around the object of its love. He begins with the Greek city-states analysed by

⁵⁰ E.g., *De regimine principum*, IV.12.2, IV.11.4, IV.15, IV.20.1–2.

⁵¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, II.1.1260b29–1261a9.

⁵² *De regimine principum*, IV.24.2.

⁵³ *De regimine principum*, IV.4, for the discussion of community, then IV.5–21 for analysis of the various polities.

Aristotle, but he frequently applies his conclusions about them to contemporary examples and ancient Roman government. His approach is also distinguished by the fact that he does not always simply repeat Aristotle's critiques, as the commentators tended to do. Sometimes he does this, at other times he applies ideas from Aristotle, but ones Aristotle had not applied to the particular polity, and sometimes he makes his own original critique or applies Aristotle's in an eccentric form. In the first example he suggests that Aristotle may have gotten something wrong.

According to Aristotle, there was only one example of a polity sharing everything, including property, women, and children, the one proposed by Socrates in Plato's *Republic*. Since this was not available in the Middle Ages, Tolomeo depended completely on Aristotle's description of it. Frankly, he did not believe it ever existed. He was appalled by the idea of women in common, for such universal 'mingling of the flesh' is against God's decrees and 'more bestial than human'. Sharing children also went against nature, in which even birds knew their own offspring. He refused to accept that these philosophers who above all others identified the good of individuals with virtue could have advocated any such thing. Maybe Aristotle got it wrong, Tolomeo says, or maybe Plato wrote in metaphor about the love of all for all and this was misunderstood.⁵⁴ So Tolomeo does not seriously critique this aspect of the polity, though, as we have seen, he spends a very long time (the next two chapters) on Plato's contention that women should participate in warfare.

Interestingly enough, in scholastic fashion, he manages to come up with three reasons to justify sharing women, and these principles could apply to the other forms of sharing as well. These are: union in a community is good and causes the republic to grow, sharing all things comes closest to the *raison d'être* of virtue and goodness, and the virtue of love unites those who love, so sharing all things would strengthen the city.⁵⁵ Aside from the moral and religious objections, he asserts that Socrates' approach distorted the correctly understood nature of union in a community. As union consisted of love diffused to all its members, it required a diversity of citizens to maintain the communal health, which would not happen if women were held in common.

Tolomeo does consider seriously the same trio of arguments for holding property in common, especially since as a mendicant he had to admit that Christ's

⁵⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.1–8.

⁵⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.1–3.

disciples (and those that followed apostolic poverty, as well, though he did not mention this) lived this way, as, he adds, did Plato, Socrates, and the Stoics. He also cites Pythagoras, who stressed virtue above all else in his polity and believed that friends should share all their possessions.⁵⁶ Much as he approved of this way of life, and even the voluntary poverty of city leaders, he realized that this mode of living was suited only to the perfect, whose 'polity was not ordained for wives or children, but to the celestial city'. It was not a matter of 'common law', that is, Roman Law, and, 'in other cities, the common state makes it expedient to have distinct possessions to avoid quarrels, as is written in Genesis about Abraham and Lot [...]. From this I conclude that it is expedient for riches to be distinct within cities to preserve the society.'⁵⁷

Only Plato proposed such a radical step. No other polity that Tolomeo discusses prescribed sharing women and children, or even of material possessions, but many did regulate the distribution of property. Two men especially, Tolomeo writes, sought to equalize the possessions of citizens: Phaleas of Chalcedon and Lycurgus of Sparta. He took the first example from Aristotle and the second from the ancient historian Justin, writing that both lawmakers acted because they believed that conflict within cities derived from unequal distribution of goods. Lycurgus went further than Phaleas, and, in addition to redistributing wealth, restricted Spartans to barter and forbade the use of money.⁵⁸ Tolomeo rejects these laws on three grounds: their actual effects, the different kinds of people in a polity, and human nature. Giving everyone the same would lead families with more children to become poor, which among other things would be a violation of natural right. Oddly, it did not occur to Tolomeo that the law could take dependents into consideration, even though the apportionment of taxation in medieval cities sometimes did just this, such as in the Florentine *catasto* of 1427. Second, since Tolomeo thought that the variety of kinds of persons who were necessary in a city would have different needs, nobles, for example, would have to spend more

⁵⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.21–22.

⁵⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.4.10–11: 'Ipsorum enim politia non ordinabatur ad uxores et filios, sed ad civitatem caelestem [...]. In caeteris autem civibus communis status expedit possessiones habere distinctas ad vitanda litigia: sicut etiam et de Abraham et Loth scribitur in Genesi [...]. Per quod habemus, quod inter cives expedit ad societatem servandam, ipsorum divitias esse distinctas.'

⁵⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.9.1–2, citing M. Junianus Justinus, *Philippian Histories of T. Pompeius Trogus*, III.2–3, and Aristotle, *Politics*, II.7.1266–67. Tolomeo also mentions the ban on money in Sparta at II.13.3.

than others. This difference was why the master, in the biblical parable of the talents, gave each of his servants different amounts of money for them to preserve. Finally, humans are by nature unequal, even before sin, so an equal distribution of possessions would lead to an increase of disputes because of the unjust distribution.⁵⁹ Later, when Tolomeo examines Sparta in more detail, he follows Aristotle in criticizing it for the opposite problem (presumably at a later period in its history) of allowing an extremely inequitable distribution of possessions, leading to one person's control of almost everything, and because its policy on dowries and inheritance impoverished the soldiers.⁶⁰ Tolomeo was not opposed to all regulation of property, but insisted, like modern social democrats, that it respect the difference of persons both in station and merit, and ensure the reasonable living standard of all citizens.

Tolomeo compares several other aspects of Plato's polity, such as its governmental institutions, to the analogous parts of other polities. The three ancient Greek cities that he considers in the most detail, and which he says were most famous among Greeks for their dedication to virtue, are Sparta (Lacedaemonia), Crete, and Chalcedon.⁶¹ Like Aristotle, Tolomeo considered all of them flawed in some regards. His criticisms help us to understand exactly how he thought of the citizen body. Of the three, he says with apparent approval, Aristotle considered Chalcedonia to be best for three reasons: the officials were moral and lived properly, there was concord among the people and never any significant sedition (even in writing), and their mild lordship never produced a tyrant. The question, of course, is why this happened, and Tolomeo's chief answer is that they enacted a good procedure for selecting officials. All three polities had a king-like official and also more representative councils, of which the Cretan was the worst, the Spartan second, and the Chalcedonian best. Only those considered wise, members of a council called the Kosmoi, chose the 'leader' of the Cretans. The Kosmoi comprised members of the leading families, 'and since the people never had a choice, jealousy, and consequently hatred, were fomented'. Though the Spartan king was not perfect, at least he was chosen by a popularly elected body of elders, called Ephors, which meant that all ranks of society could aspire to rule and even

⁵⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.9.3–7.

⁶⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.14.7–8, citing Aristotle, *Politics*, II.9.

⁶¹ *De regimine principum*, IV.14–20; IV.19.1, cites Aristotle for these cities' dedication to virtue and reputation. Aristotle actually wrote about Carthage in North Africa, not Chalcedon, Chalcedonia, or Calcedonia in Thrace. The mistake was the translator's, William of Moerbeke, and most medieval writers followed him in this.

kingship. This accorded with Tolomeo's approval of the elevation from the people with 'the consent of all counsel' in a passage already cited.⁶² The Chalcedonian arrangement sought to avoid the elitism of the Spartans, but at the same time to prevent the problems that arise when those from the lowest ranks take over. Membership on their large council of 104, the Gerousia, which chose the king, was theoretically based solely on virtue (presumably excluding by this qualification, in actuality if not in principle, most of the lower classes). The government still managed to reserve a role for the people as a whole: 'Although the king could act together with the honoured ones, at times and for certain matters he required the people, and it was licit for the people to consent or not, so that nothing would happen unless the people accepted the proposal.'⁶³ Still another way the Chalcedonians included the people safely was that when they occasionally promoted a common person to the Gerousia or kingship for his virtue, they provided him with funds, so that he would not be tempted by his poverty to enrich himself from his office.⁶⁴

Tolomeo, following Aristotle, criticizes the Chalcedonians for allowing one person to hold several offices, since the different duties would require different skills and holding multiple offices would result in conflicts of interest.⁶⁵ Here Tolomeo was not writing about the king, but other officials. He seems to have had no difficulty accepting, and even praising, a polity with a king, so long as the king did not rule by his will (his prime criterion for regal government) and so long as his rule depended on and was restricted by the people, or at least a substantial body of citizen in the polity (his prime criterion for political rule). This would not be so odd if Tolomeo allowed for the existence of a political king, as Thomas Aquinas and others had. But his analysis makes this interpretation impossible. For example, when, with Aristotle, he criticizes Sparta for not having a king that ruled

⁶² *De regimine principum*, IV.18.2–3.

⁶³ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.2–4: 'Quamvis autem istud rex posset cum praedictis honoratis, interdum tamen requirebat populum de quibusdam agendis, et licitum erat populo consentire, vel non, ita ut locum non haberet, nisi fuisset acceptum.'

⁶⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.20.1.

⁶⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.20.4–5. Tolomeo says that Aristotle gave two criticisms, but only mentions this one. Aristotle also was critical of the Carthaginians for using wealth instead of virtue as a criterion for selection, but Tolomeo seems not to have picked this up. However, IV.20.3 is a discussion of this very issue — whether the rich or the best should be picked in general, and he says that Aristotle discussed it with respect to this polity, though Tolomeo does not apply this in any way to the Chalcedonians or say they used any criterion but virtue.

for life, he explicitly contrasts this criticism with what he had said previously about it being better for political rectorors not to be permanent, and says that the Spartans did this in order 'to preserve the mode of political rectorors'. The reason Tolomeo gives for not limiting a king's term is that since kings make judgements that transcend the written law, they would be likely to use this power to attack those who would later judge them, seize goods, or favour friends, which they would be less likely to do if they did not fear what would happen after their term, and which they could not do if they were bound by law.⁶⁶ We are forced to conclude that he thought that the Chalcedonians did have a permanent king, since Tolomeo does not attack them for not having one, and this is one way they were better. The case of the Cretans is less clear, since he calls the single ruler a 'leader', not a king, which he says they once had, but if he were a political rector, this in itself did not make their polity better than that of the Chalcedonians.

There is no doubt that this is somewhat muddled; in particular, it goes against Tolomeo's frequent equation of any kind of monarchy with tyranny. One way out would be that which both Savonarola and Fortescue much later read into his words: that there is benefit in combining the regal and political modes. But this is something he never said. The imperial government is the only one he identifies as combining regal and political characteristics, and, whatever its utility, it was nothing like his ideal government. Another key difference is that the emperor combined in his person the two modes, whereas Tolomeo believed that such mixing was a mistake, quite possibly because his political aspect would not be inclined to reign in his own regal side. Most likely Tolomeo phrased his analysis in this way because he was faced with Aristotle's examples of good polities that included a king and felt he had to justify them in some way. However, he also does not resort to a principle that he enunciates elsewhere that would have partially defended the Chalcedonian king: that in areas suited to political rule even rulers whose analogues elsewhere rule regally, like counts, barons, and the doge of Venice, rule in a temperate manner suited to the region.⁶⁷

Tolomeo also had some difficulty in dealing with the general question of whether government officials in cities should be permanent or change. Although he normally regarded change as characteristic of the political mode, there were many instances in which cities had established officials with life terms. Plato, as one example, wanted all government officials to be permanent. Tolomeo criticizes

⁶⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.16.2–4.

⁶⁷ *De regimine principum*, III.22.6, IV.8.4.

this idea for several reasons, among them, that a good person could become evil, either because of a changed nature or because he was not suited to the demands of government, and that having permanent rulers led to revolt from those denied the chance to rule. He could perhaps have reconciled the second reason with his acceptance of kingship in Chalcedon, that is, by pointing out that by making most offices temporary that city left room for the ambition of the people, but the first reason was applicable to all kingship in regions suitable for political rule. Indeed, he often says this, but, as I said, he was stymied in trying to evaluate Aristotle's good polities. None of his objections prevented him from calling Plato's government political and from comparing Plato's magistrates to those in Athens after the death of King Codrus and to the Roman Senate.⁶⁸

All these polities failed in some respect for both Aristotle and Tolomeo. Aristotle could point to no example of a city so well constructed that it met all his criteria for good government. For Tolomeo none of them came close to meeting his strict standards for political rule. After conducting his survey of these polities, Tolomeo asks what the perfect polity would be. His answer is the paeon to the city, quoted above, in which all parts worked harmoniously at their particular tasks and were bound together by society and directed to virtue. But he also believed that he, unlike Aristotle, knew of at least three historical examples of such societies: Eden, the Church, and the Roman Republic. We have discussed the first two already. The Roman Republic was the only one of the three that was a fully human creation and that at one time at least was a city in the normal use of the term. Tolomeo constantly brings it up in his critiques of other polities and in his discussions of government in general. If the Roman Republic was the exemplar of all that was good in earthly government, it was an exemplar followed by many of the northern Italian city-states in the Middle Ages. We now turn to a closer look at Tolomeo's analysis of Rome and Italy, and then to his ideal government in general.

⁶⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.7.8–9. Tolomeo was fond of citing the example of the polity that came after King Codrus for the establishment of political rule. See *De regimine principum*, II.9.6, IV.1.1, IV.7.1. However, the official called the Archon served for life, though Tolomeo does not mention it.

THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, NORTHERN ITALY, AND THE BEST POLITY

Tolomeo's writings overflow with exuberant praise for republican Rome, and it served as his exemplar par excellence for a well-run city. His infatuation with Rome was key to his political ideology and illuminates the changing attitudes toward the Roman Republic and Empire in the late Middle Ages, which Hans Baron and other Renaissance historians have identified as central to the supposedly new mentality of Renaissance humanism.

Although praise of republican Rome was not unheard of in earlier medieval Europe it paled in comparison with appreciation of the empire and stood in stark contrast to the judgement of the chief architect of medieval Christianity, Augustine of Hippo. Charles Till Davis demonstrates effectively how Tolomeo used 'obsequious respect, together with a shameless flair for misquotation' to pervert systematically the message of Augustine in *The City of God* and turn what had been Augustine's condemnation of the Roman citizens' self-love and lust for power and glory into unbounded admiration for their goodness. Tolomeo's was able to build on the genuine admiration Augustine had for the discipline and dedication of the Romans, while ignoring his contempt for their motivation and ends. Tolomeo continually repositioned examples from Roman Republican history and a parade of Roman heroes that for Augustine demonstrated the futility of devotion to the Earthly City, to showcase their heroic virtue: lovers of the republic like Marcus Curtius, who rode his horse into a cleft in the earth in order to rid Rome of pestilence, Marcus Regulus, who turned himself over to sure death at the hands of the Carthaginians; the poor Marcus Curius, who refused to be corrupted by a huge Samnite bribe, and Fabricius, who enjoyed the highest honours and great power but lived poorly; those with zeal for justice, like Brutus, who killed his own rebellious sons, and Torquatus, who also killed his son for

violating military law; and those who showed exceptional piety and civil benevolence, like Scipio, who freed the daughter of Rome's enemy and gave her a dowry, and Marcus Marcellus, who captured Syracuse but, tearful at the thought of sacking such a great city, ordered that no one should violate the body of a free person. Typically, Tolomeo cites Augustine for this order, and quotes his characterization of the Romans as a people accustomed — 'to spare their subjects and vanquish the proud, and they preferred to forgive injuries than to avenge them'¹ — but he fails to mention that Augustine was himself quoting Sallust, Vergil, and Livy, only in order to discredit what he saw as the unjustified spin of propagandists for a brutal regime.

These examples all come from parallel sections of *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum* that justify Roman rule. Tolomeo's praise remained constant, while his theoretical explanations changed considerably. We have already seen how Tolomeo shifted the ground for his praise of the three Roman virtues of love of fatherland, zeal for justice (tradition of laws in *De iurisdictione imperii*), and piety and civil benevolence from the Romans' efforts to preserve the republic, in *De iurisdictione imperii* to their pursuit of the common good, in *De regimine principum*. In the earlier treatise Tolomeo muses about the republic only in one section, but in the later one he introduces Roman republican heroes, events, and institutions throughout his lengthy comparative study of politics. Rome exemplified the ideal of good government which other polities could seldom emulate, and Romans epitomized in the highest degree Tolomeo's model for citizenship and virtue. As one example of many, when Tolomeo wanted to show what the governmental and military officials of a well-run polity should be, he devoted two chapters to itemizing the myriad Roman officials, since 'the Roman Republic was very distinguished in its order'.²

According to Tolomeo's twisted version of Augustine, the Romans excelled especially with respect to the three virtues just mentioned, and these made them worthy of republican rule and wide dominion over other peoples. The first, love of their fatherland, a vastly inferior kind of love for Augustine, Tolomeo identifies with divine love, since it fosters love in the community and springs from the love of the common good above one's own. The second, zeal for justice or tradition of

¹ *De regimine principum*, III.4.5, III.5.5, III.6.2–3, citing Augustine, *City of God*, v.18 and I.6; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, IV.3.1, 5–6, II.7.6, and VI.9.2; Vergil, *Aeneid*, VI.23; and Livy, *History of Rome*, XXVI.49–50. See also *De iurisdictione imperii*, chaps 21–24. Accepting the rape or killing of slaves did not seem to blemish Marcus's virtue in Tolomeo's eyes.

² *De regimine principum*, IV.26–7; the quotation is from IV.26.1.

laws, derives from Augustine's dictum that justice is what makes lordship legitimate but conveniently ignores his further observation that this can never be found among those who lack true love of God, and never in an earthly state. The third, piety and civil benevolence (Tolomeo uses 'piety' in both the religious and secular Roman senses), explains why foreign nations came to love the Romans and how they were led voluntarily into subjection as friends and allies, but again elides Augustine's strict separation of earthly politics and true religion.³ With more justification, Tolomeo employs citations from classical authors to defend the importance of each of these virtues and their role in the qualification of ancient Romans for universal rule, but is up to his usual tricks in his selective use of biblical texts.

Love, he writes, is the greatest of virtues, the source of all other virtues, so love of fatherland, above all, would render a person or a polity deserving of lordship. Tolomeo quotes Cicero on the supremacy of this virtue: 'Of all societies none is more pleasing, none dearer than that which abides in the republic. Our parents are dear to each of us, our children are dear, our neighbours and household staff are dear, but one's fatherland encompasses all these loves. What good person would hesitate to seek death on its behalf if they could be helpful to it?'⁴ And he quotes Sallust (in the voice of Cato) on the extent of the Romans' virtue in the Good Old Days before the trauma of the Civil Wars:

You should not judge that our ancestors made our small republic great by arms — in fact, arms and horses are more abundant with us than with them — but because they displayed industry at home, just command abroad, a free spirit in counselling, and were addicted neither to lust nor transgressions. But instead of these things we now have luxury and avarice, poverty in public but opulence in private; we praise wealth, we seek idleness, we make no distinction between the good and the evil, and ambition reaps all the rewards of virtue.⁵

³ *De regimine principum*, III.4–III.6; Charles Till Davis, 'Ptolemy of Lucca and the Roman Republic', *Proceedings of the American Philosophic Society*, 118 (1974), 30–50 (p. 33).

⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.4.3, quoting Cicero, *On Duties*, I.17: 'Omnium societatum nulla est gratior, nulla carior quam ea quae cum republica perseverat. Unicuique enim nostrum cari sunt parentes, cari sunt liberi, cari sunt propinqui ac familiares, sed omnium propinquitates patria sua charitate complexa est: pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem appetere, si eidem sit profuturus?'

⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.4.3, quoting Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, LII.21: 'Nolite, inquit, existimare maiores nostros armis rempublicam ex parva magnam fecisse, quippe amplior nobis quam ipsis armorum est copia; sed quia in eis fuit domi industria, foris iustum imperium, in consulendo animus liber neque delicto neque libidini obnoxius. Pro his nos habemus luxuriam atque avaritiam, publice egestatem, privatim opulentiam, laudamus divitias, sequimur inertiam,

By a patriotic reading of Jesus's teachings still common among today's nationalists, who deny foreigners the common humanity others associate with the word *neighbour*, Tolomeo found love of fatherland to be embedded in the biblical commandment to love God and one's neighbour as oneself, and adds, 'Since there can be no dispensations from that divine precept, Cicero says in *On the Republic*: "there is no cause for which one's own fatherland should be denied".'⁶ This view is similar to that of Tolomeo's Dominican brother at Santa Maria Novella, Remigio dei Girolami, who went so far as to say that a man should love his commune more than himself, and even prefer his own damnation to that of the commune.⁷

Another aspect of the Romans' love for fatherland that impressed both Tolomeo and Augustine was the tendency of its best citizens to live in poverty in service to the republic, men such as the consuls Fabricius, who 'was no more prosperous than the poorest' and Lucius Valerius, who 'died in extreme poverty', so that his friends had to pay for the funeral.⁸ Tolomeo lavishes praise on these civic leaders and many others for supporting 'the republic with their own riches, which made them more bold and more solicitous for the care of the polity, as if their whole intention and inner disposition were directed to that',⁹ a motivation that Augustine had condemned as misdirected. As usual, Tolomeo does not acknowledge this discrepancy, but he felt that he had to explain his apparent contradiction of Aristotle, who had written that the Spartans erred in choosing paupers as judges, whose need forced them to take bribes, thereby perverting justice and allowing tyranny. Of course, choosing rich and greedy officials would have had the same effect, and Tolomeo cites the example of two consuls who served Rome in the same year, one poor and one greedy, both of whom Scipio Africanus compared to leeches. Tolomeo attempts to resolve the difference with

inter bonos et malos nullum discrimen, omnia virtutis praemia ambitio possidet.' See also *De regimine principum*, II.8.3, III.20.5, IV.23.5, and *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 21, pp. 42–43.

⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.4.4: 'Nulla causa intervenire debet unde propria patria denegetur.'

⁷ Teresa Rupp, 'Damnation, Individual, and Community in Remigio dei Girolami's *De bono communi*', *History of Political Thought*, 21 (2000), 217–36, argues persuasively that in context these statements are not as extreme as they sound.

⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.4.5, III.14.4, IV.15.4 (quoting Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, IV.36, IV.4.1); Augustine, *City of God*, v.18.

⁹ *De regimine principum*, II.8.3: 'Antiqui Romani duces [...] curam gerebant reipublicae sumptibus propriis [...] unde reddebantur ad curam politiae audaciores et magis solliciti, quasi tota in hoc esset eorum intentio et maior affectus.'

a distinction of forms of poverty that brought virtuous rulers under the umbrella of Apostolic Poverty, a distinction always necessary in the Middle Ages, when all monks took a vow of individual poverty, and yet most of the clergy and nobility normally showed contempt for the truly poor. It was even more necessary at this time because of the current controversy within the Franciscan order, in which the Spiritual Franciscans condemned any possession of property, including the communal property of most monks. 'To answer this', Tolomeo writes,

I must distinguish between two kinds of indigence: voluntary and necessary. Christ and his disciples had voluntary indigence, and so did Fabricius, as well as the other Roman consuls who showed contempt for riches so as faithfully to exercise governance over the republic. Fabricius preferred to command riches than to become rich, as was said above about him. Therefore those who are voluntarily indigent should not be driven out of government, but only those who are indigent by necessity, because such ones hardly ever govern or counsel well unless they are given enough to satisfy their appetites. The reason for and difference of the two kinds of poverty can be derived from their different ends. The end of voluntary poverty is an honourable good or the good of virtue, but the end of necessary want is a useful good to which the appetite is prone; this is an end for the sake of which something is done, as Aristotle says. Whatever those who have such indigence do, they do to the end of filling their stomachs and their purses, but those who are voluntarily indigent ordain all things to virtue, since they are contemptuous of riches. Therefore, when they exercise governance or govern citizens they always attend to the good of virtue in them, which is human good, as Aristotle also says. Further, nature does nothing in vain, as Aristotle says. But the appetite of one whose lack of riches comes from necessity, not from will, always tends to having riches. If this does not happen, the appetite will be in vain, and therefore nature impels it to this, just as a vacuum flees that which it cannot sustain. Therefore, it is difficult for such a one to avoid striving in every way to have riches. For this reason it is dangerous for the polity or the republic to elevate a pauper to the consulate or the judiciary, as Aristotle says, except when one is content with poverty, because then cupidity, which 'is the root of all evils', as Paul wrote, is cut off. Just such an indigent one is best for the government of the polity, which is why it is said in Ecclesiastes that 'there was found a poor and wise one who liberated the city through wisdom', since that one was not impeded by cupidity.¹⁰

¹⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.15.3–6, citing Aristotle, *Politics*, II.9.1270b.6–34, *Ethics*, I.2.1094b.5–7; *On the Heavens*, I.4.271a.33; I Timothy 6. 10; Ecclesiastes 9. 15; and his own previous remarks in *De regimine principum*, III.4.5, III.14.4: 'Ad hoc autem distinguere oportet de duplici indigentia, voluntaria scilicet, et necessaria. Voluntariam habuit Christus et sui discipuli; et hanc habuit Fabricius et alius consul Romanus, qui, ut fideliter gubernarent rempublicam, divitias contempserunt. Maluit enim Fabricius divitibus imperare, quam locupletem fieri, ut dictum est supra de ipso. Haec ergo non repellitur a regimine; sed secunda necessaria: quia talis raro, vel numquam bene regit vel consulit, nisi suo appetitui vacuo satis detur. Cuius ratio, et differentia de utraque paupertate haberi potest ex diversitate finis. Finis autem paupertatis voluntariae est

The Roman attitude toward wealth supported their zeal for justice and holy laws, which justified their rule by natural right, and encouraged others to follow them voluntarily. 'As Augustine writes', Tolomeo notes, "They freely consulted about the fatherland", banishing avarice and foul gain from their exercise of lordship, "and they were guilty neither of lust nor any crime", through which lordship is destroyed. Instead, they inspired human beings to love them, so that, because of their exceptionally just laws, others spontaneously subjected themselves to their lordship.' Even the apostle Paul, Tolomeo adds, appealed to Roman Law when the Jews demanded his execution. Festus, a Roman official in Palestine, rebuked the Jews with these words: "It is not the custom of the Romans to condemn them [those subject to Roman Law]", or to pardon them, "unless their accusers are present and they have the chance to defend themselves and clear themselves of the accusation".¹¹ By acting for justice in punishing the evil and rewarding the good, Romans 'seem to act in place of God in their lands, because they preserve the multitude of persons in civil society, which, according to Aristotle, is a necessity for them as naturally social animals'. Augustine had written, 'Take away justice, and what are kingdoms but certain kinds of robberies?', meaning by this to condemn all earthly rule as lacking in the only true justice — that of God — but

bonum honestum, sive bonum virtutis; finis vero necessariae inopiae est bonum utile, ad quod appetitus eius est pronus. Hoc autem est, cuius gratia aliquid agitur, ut philosophus dicit. Quidquid ergo agunt, qui talem habent indigentiam, ad hunc finem deducunt, ut suum impleant ventrem et bursam. Sed qui voluntariam, sicut contemptivi divitiarum, ordinant omnia ad virtutem: et ideo cum gubernant vel regunt cives, semper in eis bonum virtutis intendunt, quod est bonum humanum, ut idem Aristoteles dicit in primo Ethic. Amplius autem: natura nihil frustra operatur, ut dicit philosophus in primo de caelo. Appetitus vero eius qui non habet divitias ex necessitate, et non voluntate, semper tendit ad habendum divitias. Si ergo non consequitur, erit frustra: et ideo natura appetitus ad hoc impellit, sicut refugiens vacuum, quod sustinere non potest. Ergo difficile est vitare, ut non insequatur quocumque modo ad habendum divitias. Periculosum est igitur politiae, sive reipublicae pauperem assumi ad consulatum, sive ad iudicatum, ut philosophus dicit, nisi quando paupertas est placida: quia tunc est resecata cupiditas, quae "omnium malorum est radix," ut scribit apostolus. Talis enim indigens ad regimen politiae est optimus, de quo in Ecclesiaste scribitur, quod "inventus est vir pauper et sapiens, qui liberavit urbem per sapientiam suam," nulla videlicet cupiditate impeditam.'

¹¹ *De regimine principum*, III.5.1, quoting Augustine, *City of God*, v.15 and Acts 25.16: 'Ut idem doctor scribit consulebant patriae consilio libero, avaritiam relegantes a dominio sive turpis lucri gratiam, neque delicto neque libidini obnoxii, pro quibus iam stans dominium dissipatur. Trahebantur enim homines ad ipsorum amorem, ut propter ipsorum iustissimas leges se sponte eisdem subiicerent [...]. non est consuetudo Romanis damnare aliquem, sive donare, nisi praesentes habeant accusatores locumque defendendi accipiat ad abluenda crimina.'

Tolomeo took it to sanctify the rule of Rome, whose justice was so apparent to him.¹²

Finally, the Romans' 'singular piety and civil benevolence' was proved by their uncommon attitude toward their enemies, a 'sweetness of humanity' which could transform barbarians. Proverbs (actually Ecclesiastes), Tolomeo writes, could have been describing them when it said 'a sweet word multiplies friends and makes enemies mild'. According to Seneca, the reason for this is their 'generosity of spirit': 'For the mind has a sublime and elevated quality making it unable to endure a superior, but it is subjected by delight in a certain reverence or gentleness, through which it feels that it can ascend to equality and not descend to its own rank.' By its welcoming of its former enemies into the embrace of friendship and equality, illustrating Aristotle's principle that benevolence is the beginning of friendship, Rome succeeded in forging its vast empire of willing subjects.¹³

I argued above that there was a shift in Tolomeo's treatment of these virtues between *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum*, among other ways in a new emphasis on the common good. I developed this thesis in a 2002 article¹⁴ before I was aware of Hans Baron's unpublished 'Ptolemy Paper', which presents a complementary analysis of the evolution of Tolomeo's understanding of Roman virtue. Baron argues that the correlation between Roman virtues and the positive attitude toward the communal life of the Roman Republic — so frequently united in *De regimine principum* — is not found in *De iurisdictione imperii*. Instead, this text 'is still a weapon in the hands of a medieval monk and curialistic adversary' of the empire's supremacy. The passages that praise Roman virtues are preceded by dark accounts of the tyrannies of rulers in the earliest part

¹² *De regimine principum*, III.5.3–4, quoting Aristotle, *Politics*, I.2.1253a.2–3, and Augustine, *City of God*, IV.4: 'Vicem Dei gerunt in terris, quia conservant hominum multitudines in civili societate, qua necessario homo indiget cum sit animal naturaliter sociale, ut philosophus dicit in primo Politic [...]. Augustinus in quarto de Civ. Dei; dicit enim sic: "remota iustitia, quid sunt ipsa regna nisi quaedam latrocinia?"' See also *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 22, pp. 44–45.

¹³ *De regimine principum*, III.6.1, citing Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*, v.1, ext. 6, Ecclesiastes 6. 5, and Aristotle, *Ethics*, IX.5.1167a.3. I cannot locate the Seneca quote: 'singularis pietas ac civilis benevolentia [...] humanitatis dulcedo [...]. Unde et in Prov. dicitur, quod verbum dulce multiplicat amicos et mitigat inimicos [...]. Cuius quidem ratio sumitur ex generositate animi, ut dicit Seneca, qui magis ducitur, quam trahatur. Habet enim mens quoddam sublime et altum ac impatiens superioris; sed delectatione cuiusdam subiicitur reverentiae seu lenitatis, per quam suspicatur ad paria posse conscendere, et a suo non resilire gradu.' See also *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 23, pp. 45–46.

¹⁴ Blythe, 'Aristotle's *Politics*'.

of human history — Cain, Nimrod, Belus, and Ninus — which testify ‘not to the divine plan of providence [...] but to the inherent sinfulness of secular power’.¹⁵ How did Tolomeo reconcile his enthusiasm for Roman virtue and his Augustinian distrust of the state? For Baron, the argument was simple: he did not. Rather, Tolomeo was interested in the dignity of the Romans only because, in his view, they prepared the world for the monarchy of Christ’s Church. The reassessment of Roman virtues in *De iurisdictione imperii* is not accompanied by any rehabilitation of the Roman Republic. Rather, in Baron’s interpretation, Tolomeo had an interest in the Roman Republic only as the Fourth Universal Monarchy, the precursor of the Fifth Monarchy of the Roman Catholic Church; its importance was not that it provided an example of a well-functioning polity, but that it served as an essential stage in the process of evolution intended by Christ. Thus, the ‘revival of the admiration of the Roman virtues on a spiritual, figurative plan was possible, without the implication of any revival of the memory of the *Respublica Romana*’.¹⁶ Further, though Baron does not mention it, Tolomeo asserts in *De iurisdictione imperii*, in opposition to what he would say in *De regimine principum*, that although God may have chosen to reward the Romans for their virtue and because they were to be the Fourth Monarchy, nothing they did gave them the right to rule by any kind of natural right. They ruled only because God permitted it.¹⁷

At this stage, according to Baron, Tolomeo’s thought revealed ‘its impotence to embody the historical outlook’ of the Roman Republic.¹⁸ The transition to the next phase of an appreciation of republican Rome separate from any transcendental purpose required ‘the growth of Augustinian praise of the heroes of early Rome’, and an acknowledgment that the virtues displayed by these heroes led to political greatness.¹⁹ This is exactly what happened in *De regimine principum*, in

¹⁵ Hans Baron, ‘Ptolemy Paper’ (unpublished manuscript, Baron Papers, boxes 3 and 21, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Special Collections), p. 63 (48). *De iurisdictione imperii*, chaps 21–24, pp. 42–47. Because Baron’s numbering of his manuscript is inconsistent, I have numbered the pages of this manuscript sequentially from 1 to 82 to avoid confusion, and will use these numbers in my references to the ‘Ptolemy Paper’, giving Baron’s numbers in parentheses afterward.

¹⁶ Baron, ‘Ptolemy Paper’, p. 64 (49).

¹⁷ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 25, p. 48.

¹⁸ Baron, ‘Ptolemy Paper’, p. 65 (50).

¹⁹ Baron, ‘Ptolemy Paper’, pp. 65–66 (pp. 50–51). The manuscript has the word *nerves*, but it is clear in context that Baron meant ‘heroes’. This is borne out by a similar, but corrected, error four pages earlier (p. 62 (47)) where the word *nerves* is overtyped with ‘heroes’. Probably the typist misconstrued Baron’s handwriting, and caught this in the first case but not the second.

contrast, as Baron points out, to their treatment by the imperialist Dante, whose emphasis on Roman virtues is sometimes considered the first decisive step of the Renaissance. But Dante never made the leap that Tolomeo alone among his contemporaries made, in whose thought the 'Augustinian reappearance of Roman virtues gradually leads over to the rediscovery of the *Respublica Romana*, to the historical parallel between Athens, Rome, and the Commune [...] and to the beginnings of the political thought of the Renaissance'.²⁰

The basic thrust of Baron's argument is correct, particularly its perception of Tolomeo's new connection of virtue and republicanism in *De regimine principum*. But Tolomeo was certainly not the first to show a positive attitude toward the republic, nor an influence by Roman republican writers. Beryl Smalley has shown that Sallust, for example, had a pervasive influence on medieval education and, through education, on medieval views of ancient Rome. She demonstrates that medieval writers appreciated that Rome had grown great under the republic, cited republican heroes as models, and, even more importantly, grounded republican success on the virtue of these republican heroes.²¹ Charles Till Davis points out that in addition to Sallust, 'Florus, Lucan, Virgil, Servius, Cicero, Juvenal, and Valerius Maximus were popular, and whether or not medieval writers attacked the empire, they all praised pristine virtue and republican heroes.' So did Tolomeo in *De iurisdictione imperii*, of course, but Davis identifies numerous earlier medieval writers who esteemed not only Roman virtue but the republic itself, including Paul the Deacon, John of Salisbury, and Arnaldo da Brescia,²² and goes on to show how Tolomeo, Remigio, and even Dante, together with other Tuscan writers of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, showered praise upon Cicero's abilities as a statesman.²³ It was possible to appreciate the republic while still supporting the empire, as many writers did, and Davis suggests that among Tuscan

²⁰ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 66 (51).

²¹ Beryl Smalley, 'Sallust in the Middle Ages', in *Classical Influences on European Culture 500–1500*, ed. by R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 165–75 (pp. 167–68). Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Some Ideas on Municipal Progress', pp. 165–83, also discusses the role of Sallust in northern Italy. More recently, Patricia J. Osmond has written several articles showing the pervasive influence of Sallust from the thirteenth through the sixteenth centuries, most relevantly, '*Princeps Historiae Romanae*: Sallust in Renaissance Political Thought', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 40 (1995), 101–43.

²² Davis, 'Ptolemy of Lucca', p. 30.

²³ Davis, 'Ptolemy of Lucca', pp. 32–50, shows that these authors drew from common sources praising the Roman Republic and that there is no proof that Tolomeo influenced Dante, as Theodore Silverstein claims, 'On the Genesis of *De monarchia*, II, v', *Speculum*, 13 (1938), 326–49. See also Davis, 'Roman Patriotism', pp. 411–33.

writers of this time, ‘streams of classical influence flowed together, and all dealt with subjects that concerned the Roman Republic. Perhaps it is at this point that we find the “rediscovery of pre-imperial Rome” which Baron defers until Petrarch, and in regard to Cicero, until Coluccio Salutati.’²⁴

Thomas Aquinas’s portion of *De regimine principum* contains support for the republic as well, though this comes in a passage that Baron ascribes to Tolomeo’s interpolation. Whether or not this is true, the passage represents a subtly different attitude to ancient Rome than is found in *De regimine principum*. Though the author praises the aristocratic republic under the consuls and magistrates, and criticizes the loss of liberty caused by the civil wars and the rise of mostly tyrannical emperors,²⁵ his concern is for the common good, which could be both served and destroyed by both republican leaders and emperors. And although most of the emperors may have been bad, monarchy itself, albeit a mixed monarchy, is for him the best form.

This attitude was characteristic of Thomas Aquinas, regardless of who wrote the passage in question, and it is one that the Tolomeo of *De regimine principum* rejects. He also had another difference with Aquinas, who had little sympathy for the view that participation is beneficial in itself, valuable in determining government policy, or necessary for the individual. In other works, he makes it clear that participation should be limited and that it served primarily to lessen the chance of sedition in a monarchy. For Tolomeo, participation itself has a positive value and results in increased confidence and love of liberty among the citizens. Roman virtue, acquired in part by their tradition of participation, radiated outward and inspired others in less fortunate regions not only to subject themselves to the Romans, but also to acquire some of their virtue.²⁶ Tolomeo’s implication is that, although these subjects may not have been naturally suited for republican rule, they had the potential to become at least partially worthy of it through association with the virtuous Romans. This may be one way that those whom original sin and environment made unsuited for good government could find their way back to it. Those who are virtuous, through a combination of natural conditions and acquired traits, have been restored to full human status as political animals and as such could not be happy unless they were in charge of their own destinies and government.

²⁴ Davis, ‘Ptolemy of Lucca’, p. 41.

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.5.2, 5–6.

²⁶ *De regimine principum*, III.6.

These distinctions are central to understanding what was original in Tolomeo. In the process of developing his anti-monarchical ideas in *De regimine principum*, he goes much further than any other medieval writer before him in praising the Roman Republic at the expense of the empire, and, even more, by being the first to regard republican Rome as the best government that ever existed. He found none of the Greek polities analysed by both him and Aristotle to be completely satisfactory, but he had nothing but praise for the government of the Roman Republic until its decline during the civil wars. Yet the Roman Republic was not static; its institutions evolved, reaching their most perfect stage at the time described in I Maccabees, in a passage that Tolomeo quotes over and over:

No one wore a diadem or assumed the purple so as to be glorified by those things, and they held court to consult daily with the 320, always taking counsel about matters concerning the multitude so that they might do those things that were worthy. They committed their magistracy to one person to exercise lordship over all the lands for a single year, and all obeyed that one, and there was neither ill-will nor jealousy among them.²⁷

Tolomeo, citing Cicero and Sallust in conjunction with the biblical passage, emphasizes the benefit of the moderate and understanding rule of the consuls, who 'exercised governance with a certain forgiving spirit' and thereby earned the citizens' love and benevolence. This, he says, strengthened their rule more than any stockpile of arms could have done.²⁸

Tolomeo believed that during this consular period Roman citizens exhibited the greatest virtue and enjoyed the most widespread participation of the City's history. Its government at that time was the model for the near-perfect constitution that other polities should emulate. Nevertheless, he insists that the Roman Republic was at all times praiseworthy and benefited from political government, and Tolomeo in some sections of *De regimine principum* implies that Rome may have lived under political rule even during the initial period of kings. Romulus, Rome's founder, established political rule in the form of a government comparable to the ancient Greek polities that Tolomeo had praised to some extent:

²⁷ I Maccabees 8. 14–16; see *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, II.8.4, III.6.3, III.12.5, III.20.3, III.20.6, IV.1.4, IV.2.1, IV.7.4, IV.19.4, IV.25.2: 'Nemo portabat diadema nec induebatur purpura ut magnificaretur in ea, et quia curiam fecerunt in qua consulebant quotidie trecentos viginti, consilium habentes semper de multitudine ut quae digna sunt gerant, et quia committunt uni homini magistratum suum per singulos annos dominari universae terrae, et omnes obediunt uni, et non est invidia nec zelus inter eos.' The quotation given is from III.6.3 and differs in a few insignificant words from I Maccabees.

²⁸ *De regimine principum*, II.8.4.

‘He divided the whole city into three parts: senators, knights, and plebeians. Then, when there were kings in Rome, the senators held the place of the elders called Ephors in Sparta, Kosmoi in Crete, or Gerousia in Chalcedon, as I made clear above. And because the senators were principally from the multitude, the rule of the Romans was called political.’²⁹

The last sentence in this quotation is ambiguous. Out of context, it clearly applies the label ‘political’ to the period of kings, but the paragraph begins with the period of the consuls and adds the part about Romulus to explain the origin of the senators, so the final sentence may refer to the consular period alone. The fact remains that Tolomeo carefully compared Rome in the period of kings to Chalcedon, which had a king and which he nevertheless called political. As when he wrote about Chalcedon and the other cities, Tolomeo had some difficulty in formulating the situation of a political government with a king. He was apparently willing to accept and praise a government so long as the king was not able to rule by his will (his main criterion for regal rule) and was regulated by political bodies. Such a government, however, could never reach the heights of political government, and the criticisms Tolomeo had levelled at Sparta, Crete, and Chalcedon applied equally to early Roman government. He could certainly accept Romulus as single lawgiver and founder, as Lycurgus had been of Sparta, but the hereditary succession of the Roman kings may have been too much. This could explain, if Baron was correct that Tolomeo interpolated a passage in Book I, Chapter 7, why he sought to preserve, counterfactually, a royal election in Rome. On the other hand, Tolomeo shows his usual confusion in regal matters in other passages where he sharply distinguishes the government of Rome under the kings from political rule, states that they violated the rules of good kingship applied in the Bible to Moses, and compares Tarquin to Achab.³⁰

What is clear is that eventually the Roman kings became tyrants and monopolized for themselves the authority that previously was shared with the Senate, with the result that the Roman people revolted against them. After they expelled the kings, Tolomeo writes, Rome flourished under the political rule of consuls,

²⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.5: ‘Processu vero temporis senatores assumpserunt regendi potestatem, licet senatores primo a Romulo sint inventi. Divisit enim totam civitatem in tres partes: in senatores, milites, et plebem; et tunc existentibus regibus in Urbe tenebant locum senum qui erant in Lacedaemonia qui Ephori dicebantur, sive in Creta quos Kosmos appellabant, sive in Chalcedonia quos nominabant Gerusios, ut supra est manifestum. Et quia senatores cum primis erant in multitudine, ideo tunc principatus Romanorum politicus dicebatur.’

³⁰ *De regimine principum*, II.9.6, III.11.5.

dictators, and tribunes for 444 years until the time of Julius Caesar.³¹ The changing character of that political rule is revealed in Tolomeo's examples for his definitions of forms of government:

[I]f a few virtuous ones guide a government it is called 'aristocracy' (as was the case in the city of Rome under the two consuls and the dictator just after the expulsion of the kings), but if many guide it (which the histories relate happened in the course of time in the same city under the consuls, dictators, and tribunes, and afterward under the senators) they call such a government a polity from the word *polis*.³²

Later, Tolomeo delineates an evolution of the republican institutions during the consular period, as segments of the community were gradually elevated to an active role in government, eventually producing the ideal system described in Machabees:

First the two consuls were created; then, as the histories tell us, the Dictator and the Master of Equites, to whom belonged the whole civil government, and so Rome was governed by an aristocratic rule. Later, tribunes were set up to favour the plebeians and the people, so that the consuls and the others I mentioned could not exercise government without them, and in this way democratic rule was appended. In the course of time the senators took over the power of governing.³³

Crises, brought on by external threat, power-hungry officials, or enraged Romans, propelled the changes. After the expulsion of the last king, Tolomeo writes, Brutus established two annual, equal consuls to ensure moderation and preclude the kind of insolent ruler that had just been deposed. Tolomeo asserts that Roman rule was always relatively mild, and possessed a 'certain civility'. The consuls depended for their power on the many, who could judge even the greatest consuls, such as Scipio Africanus.³⁴ Fearing the citizens' wrath, most consuls ruled

³¹ *De regimine principum*, II.9.6.

³² *De regimine principum*, IV.1.2: 'si tale regimine gubernatur per paucos et virtuosos vocatur aristocratia, ut per duos consules vel etiam dictatorem in urbe Romana in principio expulsis regibus; si autem per multos, veluti per consules, dictatores et tribunos, sicut in processu temporis in eadem contigit Urbe, postea vero senatores, ut historiae narrant, tale regimen politiam appellant, a polis.'

³³ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.5: 'Primo enim creati fuerunt consules qui erant duo, postea dictator et magister equitum, ut historiae narrant, ad quos pertinebat totum civile regimen; et sic principatu aristocratico regebatur. Ulterius inventi sunt tribuni in favorem plebis et populi sine quibus consules et alii praedicti regimen exercere non poterant; et sic adjunctus est democraticus principatus. Processu vero temporis senatores assumpserunt regendi potestatem, licet senatores primo a Romulo sint inventi.'

³⁴ *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, 4, IV.1.6.

moderately. Later, because of the Sabine threat, the Senate added the office of dictator who was to rank above the consuls, but who was also limited in the length of his rule. Still later the people, who felt themselves to be oppressed by the consuls and the Senate, instituted the tribunate.³⁵ Each change resulted in the 'appending' of a new official or officials either to protect against an external danger or to address the grievance of one class of citizens; old institutions and rulers were not eliminated; rather, the system became more representative of all social groups.

Did these changes result in a qualitative transformation of Roman government, essential to the eventual production of a near-perfect republic, or did they merely represent an incremental fine-tuning of the government? Certainly, Tolomeo predicated no change of mode from despotic to political government, although arguably there may have been a previous overturning of regal rule. The entire republican period was political and the rule of the consuls always depended on the many, even before the addition of the tribunes or the elevation of the Senate to its most prominent position.³⁶ But in the period before the tribunes there was no rule of the many in its proper sense, that is, democracy. This distinction stems from Tolomeo's notion that any political rule depends on the many in some essential way, but not every political rule *is* the rule of the many. Since the consuls continued to exist, what happened was not that government was completely turned over to the many, but that a democratic element was added to the previous aristocratic government, producing a mixed government of the type most common in Aristotle's *Politics*: the mixture of the few and the many. Tolomeo's word *appended* definitely suggests a Polybian mixed constitution of the naturally evolving kind Polybius preferred to the artificially established kind, although Tolomeo could not have known this since Polybius was not available in Western Europe until two centuries later. Tolomeo's words also anticipated to a degree Machiavelli's much later explanation of the success of Rome and even suggests Machiavelli's argument that dynamism in political life is more beneficial than stasis, that political perfection may come about through the clash of class interests. The tempering effect of each new institution on the others also suggests the Thomist model of mixed constitution. This is something missed by Davis, who was intent only to prove Tolomeo's republicanism, and by the Carlyles, who contrasted Tolomeo's supposed indifference to forms of rule to Thomas's mixed

³⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.26.1–3, II.10.1. Tolomeo had the idea that the dictator ruled for five years.

³⁶ *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, IV.1.6.

constitutionalism. Baron also missed this in his 'Ptolemy Paper', although it strongly supports his (and my) point about the evolution of Tolomeo's thought: in *De iurisdictione imperii* there is no indication that Roman government evolved in any way, only that the Romans possessed virtues abstractly. I believe that Tolomeo followed up the hint provided by Thomas Aquinas when he compared the Jewish and Roman governments, describing the Jewish polity as a mixed constitution, but not further characterizing the Roman at all.³⁷

Had Tolomeo called the consuls or dictator a monarchic element, his description of the Roman Republic would have been even closer to that of Polybius as the rule of the one, few, and many. Since the consuls, and even more so the dictators, enjoyed dominion over all, Tolomeo wondered whether their rule might not be regal, but immediately rejected this possibility because there is no way in which any of these officials could be called single rulers. They were elected, their power, however great, depended on the many, there was alternation of office and continuous consultation with the Senate, and they were not always nobles, all of which means that their rule was political, not regal in any respect. Those few instances in which a son succeeded were accidental, Tolomeo writes, for the son too was elected, had no a priori right to rule, and most importantly had a limited term of office.³⁸ At one point he does refer to the consulate as a 'monarchy',³⁹ but the context — the Roman government achieving world domination under the consuls — shows that he was writing of the single hegemony of the Fourth World Monarchy, not the governmental form of monarchy. He was reluctant to identify consuls as monarchs, first because of his general hostility to kingship, and second, because the idea of a king with a term limit, or multiple kings, as in Sparta and as would have been necessary in Rome under two consuls, was reprehensible to him, even in a political regime. A possible third reason is that he preferred to speak in terms of modes instead of forms.

However, a mixed constitution could not have been far from his thoughts, since he compared the government of Chalcedon, Sparta, and Crete not only to Rome at the time of the kings, but also to the optimal rule of consuls, Senate, and tribunes of I Machabees.⁴⁰ Although Tolomeo never uses the term, these polities were Aristotle's most prominent examples of mixed constitutions, and Tolomeo

³⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, I.4. See Carlyle, *Medieval Political Theory*, v, 72; Davis, 'Roman Patriotism', p. 413.

³⁸ *De regimine principum*, III.20.1–3, II.8.4, IV.1.5.

³⁹ *De regimine principum*, III.12.5.

⁴⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.5.

saw the Roman Republic in similar terms. His description of the chronological evolution of Roman institutions also demonstrates that the way he applied the word *polity* to the Roman state, and by extension to those governments he thought were similar to it, implied more than that they were political regimes. After he details the appending of the dictator, tribunes, and senators to the consular government, he adds, as quoted above: 'they call such a government a polity', indicating his understanding of 'polity' here as specifying just such a mixed constitution. Aristotle also uses 'polity' in this sense, though he and Tolomeo at other times employ the word in the generic sense. At least until the kings became tyrants, Tolomeo could have applied a similar reasoning to the early kingship (if we accept his ambiguous attribution of political government to it), which then would have to be seen as a mixed government of monarchy and aristocracy.

Tolomeo closes his comparison of Chalcedon and the Roman Republic with the cryptic comment that 'these things are said in order to show that the rule of the Greeks at the time of Aristotle is very similar to that of our own time and place',⁴¹ that is, I suppose, at the time of ancient Rome. Alternately, he could have meant that by comparing the Chalcedonian example with the more familiar case of Rome, medieval Italian readers could see the similarities of both to their own city-states. In any case, what he presumably sought to convey was the idea that all the forms of government described by Aristotle, including the mixed constitution, were experienced by Rome, and continued to find expression in later times.

Tolomeo's historical description presents a sequence of types of rule in Rome, which cycled through Aristotle's forms. After the kings came aristocracy. Then, he writes, when the senators' power grew under the republic, 'since they were chiefly from the multitude, the rule of the Romans was political', here using the term *political* not in his usually modal sense, but as the adjectival form of Aristotle's of 'polity', that is, good democracy. Finally, the corruption of a few during the civil wars brought oligarchy.⁴² Since in each instance the change left in place all the earlier offices, the labels here are descriptive not of the government as a whole but of the most powerful element of its mixed constitution. This again is a Polybian idea: as the mixed constitution attempted to temper one group with another there was a perpetual struggle for balance; only when there was perfect balance would there be stability. The Roman Republic's decline into civil wars and

⁴¹ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.6: 'Haec pro tanto sint dicta ad ostendendum regimen Graecorum multum concordare cum nostra etiam tempore Aristotelis.'

⁴² *De regimine principum*, IV.19.5: 'quia senatores cum primis erant in multitudine, ideo tunc principatus Romanorum politicus dicebatur. Quando vero corrumpebatur politia per potentiam aliquorum, puta tempore quo exorta sunt bella civilia, tunc regebatur oligarchico principatu.'

monarchy prevented it from achieving this perfect balance, but it came close at its height.

Baron, in his 'Ptolemy Paper', argues that Tolomeo's changed perception of ancient Rome in the latter part of the thirteenth century stemmed largely from regional ecclesio-political developments affecting northern Italian Guelph republicans, but he was struck by Tolomeo's early use of the Maccabean passage in *De iurisdictione imperii* together with that treatise's 'unusual interest in the role of the Roman Senate', in particular the assertion that the empire was never a hereditary monarchy, since the Senate played a crucial role in electing and controlling the emperor. Baron did not believe that these things signalled an early re-evaluation of government as such, but rather a 'curialistic tendency to enfeeble the authority of the imperial position' after the struggle with the Hohenstaufen.⁴³ In his view Tolomeo cited Maccabees solely to promote the papacy as Fifth World Monarchy, through an analogy with the Roman Republic in which the pope and his curia took over the role of the emperor and Senate, and in support cites Tolomeo's comment that '[t]he Roman Church acts in the same way today, for the highest pontiff takes counsel with the cardinals, who hold the position of the senators'. Baron fails to mention it, but his argument is made more credible by the fact that Tolomeo does not repeat this analysis in *De regimine principum*, which speaks to his different purpose there. Baron also does not mention that the rest of the quoted sentence referred to the Donation of Constantine, which formally, though spuriously, bestowed the imperial power on the pope.⁴⁴

Baron insists that Tolomeo was not particularly concerned in *De iurisdictione imperii* with good earthly government, but rather with essentially medieval ecclesiastical matters. Nevertheless, he allows that even there Tolomeo revealed, incidentally, the rudiments of a new attitude toward government:

[E]ven in this curialistic context, the quotation from 1 Machabees produces an argument in favor of government by discussion. Proverbs 24.6, Tolomeo recalls, also maintains that 'in a multitude of counsellors there is safety,' and it is for this reason that the ancient Romans are praised as models in the time, 'quando floruit res publica.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 68 (53), citing *De regimine principum*, III.20.1.

⁴⁴ *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31 p. 64, cited in Latin by Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 78 (55) up to the word *senatorum*: 'Quemadmodum adhuc hodie Romana observat ecclesia, summus enim pontifex cum cardinalibus, qui locum possident senatorum, ut Constantini habetur traditione et in allegato supra frequentius capitulo de eiusdem actibus declaratur.' The 'oft-cited chapter' is Gratian, *Decretum*, D.96, c.14, which is the text of the Donation.

⁴⁵ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', pp. 70–71 (55–56), quoting Tolomeo, *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 31, p. 63, except that Tolomeo mistakenly identifies the biblical passage as Proverbs 33.

It is only in *De regimine principum*, Baron writes, that we find a sophisticated re-evaluation of the empire and government in general, though even in the primitive form found in *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo's understanding of ancient Rome was 'a starting-point for a historical reinterpretation of the ancient Roman empire' and, though 'not yet reaching correct historical conclusions', a precursor of the later Renaissance tendency to approach history 'from the spirit of venerable institutions of the *Respublica Romana*.'⁴⁶

By the time of *De regimine principum*, Baron argues, though unfortunately not in much detail, Tolomeo had made the crucial transition. He wrote with much more concern for government in itself, and while the 'interest of the curialist writer receded into the background, the impact of the Roman Senate behind and beside the empire remained revealed to an extent which had been unknown and inaccessible to all preceding medieval writers'. The Senate's place had been limited in *De iurisdictione imperii*, being mentioned only in conjunction with Maccabees as one of several traditional electors of the emperor, and as a body that, together with his officials, Constantine consulted before issuing the Donation of Constantine. In *De regimine principum* there was a 'new clear vision of a pivotal place of the Senate throughout the consular period down to Caesar's overthrow of the republican constitution'.⁴⁷ Baron was struck by the way a biblical passage had served as a stimulus to this re-evaluation of republican Rome, which in turn led to a new understanding of classical authors, who had been ignored even though they had been readily available. By this route Tolomeo's thought led directly to Renaissance humanism: 'It is a very remarkable fact that the impression made by the rise of Roma from a late biblical author should thus have filled the place in the history of the historical thought of the Renaissance which would finally be taken by the grandiose report and analysis of Polybius. It is a striking example of the continuity of the Renaissance from "Guelfism" to Humanism.'⁴⁸

At the end of the republic, Julius Caesar and then the emperors instituted one more change, which differed qualitatively from the earlier constitutional adjustments. They destroyed political rule and for the most part undercut the power of all the other groups, assuming all power for themselves. This transformation would seem to complete the cycle of forms (except for the bad type of democracy), with tyranny represented by the Caesar's seizure of power. For some reason Tolo-

⁴⁶ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 68 (53).

⁴⁷ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 69 (54).

⁴⁸ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 71 (56).

meo does not make this connection when he itemizes the cycle, but he does just that elsewhere, when he decries Caesar's 'usurpation':

[I]n the Roman government dominion was political from the expulsion of the kings until the usurpation of command, which was when Julius Caesar with his enemies prostrate [...] and with the world subjugated, assumed singular dominion to himself as a monarch and converted the polity into a despotic or tyrannical rule.⁴⁹

This is why he concludes that Caesar was slain for abuse of power and his contempt for the senators: 'Thus provoked, the great ones of the city, instigated by Brutus and Cassius and most of the Senate, ran him through with twenty-four daggers in the Capitol.'⁵⁰

Rome remained political in a degenerate sense even under the oligarchs, but the time was past when the virtue of the Roman people as a whole made good republican government possible, and the way to tyranny was opened. Rome continued to wield worldwide power and even expanded its hegemony for a time, but the nature of its empire had changed. The original empire of Rome (as opposed to the Roman Empire), Tolomeo's Fourth Monarchy, flourished especially during the period of greatest participation praised in Maccabees. Their exemplary virtue made the Romans of that time worthy of their empire, but afterwards virtue declined and authority became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. In the end Caesar's tyranny ended the republic and converted the common good, which had only recently been hijacked for the good of the few, to the good of one man: Julius Caesar.

Ronald Witt reminded us that we should be wary of equating anti-Caesarist sentiments with anti-imperialism, since the former were usually personal and not attacks on the empire itself or on the line of emperors beginning with Augustus.⁵¹

⁴⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.4: 'in regimine Romano a regum expulsiōne dominium fuerit politicum usque ad usurpationem imperii, quod fuit quando Julius Caesar prostratis hostibus [...] subjugatoque orbe, singulare sibi assumpsit dominium ut monarchiam convertitque politiam in despoticum principatum sive tyrannicum.' Note that Tolomeo, as he often does, equates tyranny and despotism. It is interesting to compare this cycle of politics with that suggested by Aristotle — kingdom, polity, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy (Aristotle, *Politics*, III.15.1286b).

⁵⁰ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.4: 'Ex quo provocati maiores urbis, ipsum in Capitolio viginti quattuor pugionibus perforaverunt auctoribus Bruto et Cassio, plurimoque senatu.' See also II.9.6, III.8.5, III.12.5.

⁵¹ Ronald Witt, 'The Rebirth of the Concept of Republican Liberty in Italy', in *Renaissance: Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. by Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 173–99 (pp. 193–94); Witt, 'The *De tyranno* and Coluccio Salutati's View of Politics and Roman History', *Nuova rivista storica*, 53 (1969), 434–74 (pp. 443–50).

To some extent this characterizes Tolomeo's attitude, although I disagree with Witt's opinion that Tolomeo's criticisms of the empire were 'too vague to be significant'. Tolomeo identifies Caesar's 'usurpation of empire' with the end of Rome's role as a world monarchy, and, given this, Augustus could be no other than Caesar's successor, whose rule represented the destruction of the true polity of the Roman Republic and the imposition of a 'despotic or tyrannical rule'. Charles Till Davis argues that, for Tolomeo, Augustus served as a vicar of Christ.⁵² There may be some truth to this, but if so the emperor did not fulfil his role as vicar in the same sense as the pope did. Christ's Incarnation made it inevitable that his regal and sacerdotal empire would replace the series of secular ones, and that the pope would head it, whether or not declining Roman virtue had previously undermined the republic. Had the republic continued in its most perfect form, Romans may still have deserved the empire they ruled, but it still would have been superseded as World Monarchy. Instead, Tolomeo says that Rome ceased to be World Monarchy even earlier, because of Caesar's 'usurpation of empire'.⁵³ This means that there was no World Monarchy when Christ was born. Caesar's crime and Augustus's elevation both were part of the interregnum between empires, and nothing Augustus could do could restore himself and his successors to the Fourth Monarchy's previous dignity. Since the Kingdom of Christ was not yet ripe for manifesting itself, Christ allowed Augustus to act as a placeholder for the Fifth Monarchy's true leader, so in a sense as his vicar, but certainly not a legitimate ruler of a World Monarchy in his own right.

In Tolomeo there is no trace of the theory, found, for example, in Dante, that the birth of Christ under the Roman Empire indicated God's acknowledgement of the legitimacy of that rule. On the contrary, he was born in an empire whose rule had recently been seized by a tyrannical usurper and in the territory of the former Fourth Monarchy, symbolizing the transfer of universal power from Rome to the Church, which the Roman Empire at best serves. Having been forged in the republic, Roman Law may have continued to provide a system of fair and just law, as Paul and others acknowledged, but the empire's only possible claim for maintaining its wide dominion was that this situation made more effective its support of the Fifth Monarchy. Davis claims that this viewpoint elevated the republic as a precursor to Christ, but this is true only in a formal sense and the reverse is more in accord with Tolomeo's way of thinking — Rome deserved

⁵² Davis, 'Ptolemy of Lucca', pp. 42–43.

⁵³ *De regimine principum*, III.12, IV.1.

its previous position, and perhaps its role in preparing the way for Christ, because of its great virtue and perfect republican government. The rise of the Fifth Monarchy removed any theological justification for universal secular government. If God expressed his will through the Universal Church, no universal secular monarchy was necessary, and each state must govern itself for the common good of its people, independent of any religious concerns other than subordinating itself to the Roman Church.

Not only did the coming of the emperors destroy what had been a near-optimal polity, it introduced a form of government to which the Romans as a people were not suited. According to Tolomeo's theory of the influence of the stars, the geographic region to which Rome belongs was most suited for political rule. This region extends to northern Italy, and Tolomeo transferred much of the affection he had for the Roman Republic in the ancient world to the medieval northern Italian city-states. In his definition of political rule, Tolomeo refers to both: 'Political rule exists when a region, province, city, or town is governed by one or many according to its own statutes, as happens in regions of Italy and especially in Rome.'⁵⁴ He frequently goes on from praise of ancient Rome to point to parallels in the northern Italian city-states. For instance, after describing Rome in its period of optimal government, he comments that its kind of government, 'is characteristic of cities, as we see especially in parts of Italy'.⁵⁵ Or, in considering an exception to the principle that political rule is usually restricted to cities, he writes, 'Provinces seem to favour regal government, which is found in most of them, with the exception that Rome exercised governance over the globe through consuls, tribunes, and senators, as the Book of Maccabees shows, and also with the exception of certain Italian cities, which are governed politically, even though they exercise lordship over provinces.'⁵⁶

The virtue necessary for political rule derives from the character of a people. God is happy to validate virtuous rule, and civic participation can lead to an

⁵⁴ *De regimine principum*, II.8.1: 'Politicus quidem quando regio sive provincia sive civitas sive castrum per unum vel plures regitur secundum ipsorum statuta, ut in regionibus contingit Italiae et praecipue Romae.'

⁵⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.1.2: 'hoc regimen proprie ad civitates pertinet, ut in partibus Italiae maxime videmus'.

⁵⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.2.1: 'Provinciae enim magis ad regale pertinere videntur, ut in pluribus reperitur, excepta Roma, quae per consules et tribunos ac senatores gubernabat orbem, ut in dicto libro Mach. est manifestum, et quibusdam aliis Italiae civitatibus, quae licet dominentur provinciis, reguntur tamen politice.'

increase in virtue. Part of this virtue comes from devotion to religion, but much like Machiavelli two centuries later, Tolomeo did not require it to be the Christian religion. His prime example of virtuous rule is pagan Republican Rome, which he praises for its support of religion. As Tolomeo came to see salvation as the primary end of secular government, he began to treat civic and religious virtues as being of the same nature, though naturally religious virtue was greater. So Tolomeo could interpret the virtue of pagan Rome as a striving for the true God, in the only way possible before Christ, the nurturing of civic virtue, through which citizens began the redemptive process. Though it would of course be preferable to have a Christian government, pagan government could excel, and Tolomeo could not point to any Christian government that had surpassed the Roman Republic. In *De iurisdictione imperii* he had not yet worked this out, and he neither assigns a cause to Roman virtue there, nor connects it to spiritual development, nor assumes a continuity in medieval times of this virtue because of the inherent nature of the Roman people. Indeed, he attacks the medieval Christian Romans, accusing them, quoting the words of Bernard of Clairvaux, of 'impudence and haughtiness [...]. A nation unaccustomed to peace [...] stern [...] intractable [...]',⁵⁷ whose rule God merely tolerated.

In *De regimine principum*, as his conception of inherently political peoples evolved, Tolomeo (probably unconsciously) used words close to those Bernard wrote to condemn modern Romans to praise northern Italians. In *De iurisdictione imperii* Tolomeo had quoted Bernard's description of the Romans as a nation 'not knowing how to be subject except when it could not resist'.⁵⁸ In *De regimine principum*, he writes: 'Certain others have a virile spirit, a bold heart, and a confidence in their intelligence, and these cannot be ruled other than by political rule [...]. Such lordship is especially strong in Italy, where [...] the inhabitants were always less able to be subjected than others, so that if you should want to bring them under despotic rule, this could not be done unless the lords tyrannized.'⁵⁹ Tolomeo frequently insisted that Italian rule is characteristically

⁵⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione*, IV.2, as quoted in *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 24, p. 47: 'gens insueta paci, tumultui asueta, gens immitis, intractabilis'.

⁵⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione*, IV.2, as quoted in *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 24, p. 47: 'subditi nescia, nisi cum non possit resistere'.

⁵⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.8.4: 'Quaedam etiam virilis animi et in audacia cordis et confidentia suae intelligentiae, et tales regi non possunt nisi principatu politico [...] Tale autem dominium maxime in Italia viget unde minus subijcibiles fuerunt semper [...] quod si velis trahere ad despoticum principatum, hoc esse non potest nisi domini tyrannizent.'

political.⁶⁰ Although this position typically can be found only in *De regimine principum*, there is a hint of its evolution in Tolomeo's thought in *De operibus sex dierum*, probably written in the 1290s, which, in its one reference to political rule applies it to angels and states that this kind of rule is similar to 'the custom of Italy, where the *podestà* exercise lordship over rulers [princes]'.⁶¹

Unfortunately, Tolomeo does not devote the same kind of energy to analysing the governmental structures of the Italian city-states as he does to those of ancient Rome, and we are forced to reconstruct his ideas about them from scattered references. There is no question, however, but that he sought to show parallels between the Italian governments, Rome in its optimal period, and Greek city-states in so far as they approached the Roman ideal. As the quotations from *De operibus sex dierum* suggest but do not state directly, the *podestà* occupied the place of the consul, as he writes in *De regimine principum*. After citing the Maccabean praise of Rome, he adds that that republic was like Italy in his own time, where one person (the *podestà*) ruled for a year.⁶² As was true of any political office, the *podestà*'s power was limited by law and other restrictions. Unlike regal rulers, neither the *podestà* nor other rectors could, for example, institute taxation without appropriate law or take any income for themselves beyond a just wage.⁶³

Parallel to the Roman tribunes, who served as a democratic element, were the officials known variously as *anziani* (elders) or priors: 'In the sixth year, because the consuls excessively oppressed the plebeians, the people instituted the tribunes, who were called this, as Isidore tells us in the *Etymologies*, because they handed down rights to the people. In the cities of Italy the *anziani*, who are ordained to the defence of the plebeian nation, hold this position today.'⁶⁴ Elsewhere, he discusses this office in comparison with the principal *praetorium* of the polity described by Hippodamus, as reported by Aristotle. The principal *praetorium*, designed for appeals from the judgements of the ordinary *praetorium*,

⁶⁰ Tolomeo mentions the political nature of Italian rule at *De regimine principum*, II.8.1, II.10.2, III.20.5, III.22.6, IV.1.2, IV.1.5, IV.2.1, IV.8.4, IV.13.6, IV.18.3, IV.19.5, and IV.25.3.

⁶¹ *De operibus sex dierum*, III.9, p. 45.

⁶² *De regimine principum*, IV.1.5.

⁶³ *De regimine principum*, III.20.4: 'secundum morem Italiae, ubi Potestates principibus dominantur'.

⁶⁴ *De regimine principum*, IV.26.3: 'Sexto autem anno, quia consules nimis gravabant plebem, a populo instituti fuerunt tribuni, sic dicti, ut tradit Isidorus Lib. nono Etymolog., eo quod iura populo tribuant: quem locum in civitatibus Italiae tenent antiani, ordinati ad defensionem gentis plebeiae.'

was composed of chosen elders of the city. Tolomeo also compares the *anziani* to other Italian city and corporate officials: 'The Tuscans call such elders *anziani* or priors [...]. Sometimes a syndic is constituted for the same purpose, so-named for taking care of the polity, so that it is not harmed through injustice. This is what the stewards of associations do also.'⁶⁵

Priors and elders came into existence in northern Italian cities at the beginning of the period of the *Popolo* to represent the interests of the *popolo*, so Tolomeo's identification of them as representative of the people is reasonable, with the understanding that the *popolo* was not the people as a whole, but only those represented by guilds, and in many cases only the major guilds. The office originated in Bologna in 1231 and spread rapidly to most of the city-states. *Anziani* was the term used in Lucca, so it is what came first to Tolomeo's mind, and *priori* was the Florentine version. Although they certainly fulfilled an oversight function similar to that of Hippodamus's *praetorium*, for example, in judging the *podestà*, their role usually went beyond such evaluations into the realm of legislation. Tolomeo alludes to this, without using their title, when he refers to the subjection of *podestà* to law, particularly with regard to taxation. He also confirms his analogies in general in his comparison of how the two *praetoria* and the *anziani* and other citizen bodies made their decisions:

In his polity Hippodamus established that the wise ones of the ordinary and principal *praetorium* should not gather together to make judgements, but that each should individually write their counsel on tablets with regard to the sentence to be handed down and present them in secret to the ordinary or appellate judge. Aristotle asserts that it was to be done this way so that they do not perjure themselves and turn aside from the truth out of fear of the citizens. The Tuscans follow this method today in their polity. They place beans or small coins in containers corresponding either to an affirmative or negative choice for proposed actions on behalf of the republic, or for condemning or absolving a citizen.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ *De regimine principum*, IV.13.3: 'quos Thusci antianos vel priores vocant [...]. Interdum autem est syndicus constitutus ad idem, sic nominatus quasi curam gerens politiae, ne laedatur per iniustitiam, ut faciunt collegiorum oeconomi.'

⁶⁶ *De regimine principum*, IV.13.4: 'Item statuit dictus Hippodamus in sua politia, in utroque praetorio tam ordinario, quam principali, ut iudicia fierent sine collectione sapientium, sed quilibet scriberet singillatim in pugillaribus de sententia ferenda suum consilium, quam ordinario, vel iudici appellationis secreto porrigeret: cuius causam Aristoteles assignat, ne forte timore civium deieraret, et declinaret a vero: quem modum hodie politiae Thuscorum observant ponendo fabam, sive denarium in pyxidibus deputatis ad affirmativam vel negativam super rebus agendis pro republica, sive pro condemnando, sive pro absolvendo civem.'

Tolomeo is much less explicit in identifying aristocratic institutions in northern Italy corresponding to the Roman Senate. But he does make it clear that he believed that these institutions existed. The clearest statement comes in his evaluation of the Chalcedonian polity, the ancient Greek one closest to his ideal. There he describes how the Chalcedonians chose the better citizens — either for the council of the aristocratic council of 104 members called the Gerousia, which he refers to as ‘Honoured Elders’, or for the office of king — and adds that in the course of debating matters affecting the common good of the city the king and Gerousia always sought the consent of the people. This did not simply mean passive consent:

Although the king could act together with the honoured ones, at sometimes and for certain matters he needed the people, and it was licit for the people to consent or not, so that nothing would happen unless the people accepted the proposal. In these cases the state of the polity was reduced to democratic rule because these things were done in favour of the plebeian nation.

He also identifies an oligarchic element in Chalcedon, the few elected from the wealthy known as the Pentacontarchs, who had a role in choosing the Gerusia. This discussion naturally led him once more to a comparison with the Rome of Maccabees and the Italian polities. Such a system, he writes, ‘is characteristic of the Chalcedonian polity, and today the cities of Italy and especially of Tuscany observe this mode. This procedure was also observed in Rome for the whole time that the consulate lasted.’⁶⁷

Tolomeo indicates that the roles of the people were not to be restricted to those just specified. In reference to Hippodamus, he writes that that legislator ‘also established that the whole people — warriors, artisans, and even farmers — should choose the ruler, for they were unwilling to choose a ruler through hereditary succession. For the most part, the cities of Italy follow this method’.⁶⁸ Tolomeo later condemns the Cretans for leaving the choice of the king-like leader

⁶⁷ *De regimine principum*, IV.19.4–5: ‘Quamvis autem istud rex posset cum praedictis honoratis, interdum tamen requirebat populum de quibusdam agendis, et licitum erat populo consentire, vel non, ita ut locum non haberet, nisi fuisset acceptum, postquam fuisset propositum populo; et tunc reducebatur status politiae ad principatum democraticum, quia haec fiebant in favorem gentis plebeiae [...]. Fuit proprium politiae Chalcedoniorum: quem modum hodie observant civitates Italiae et praecipue Tusciae. Hic etiam ritus servatus fuit in urbe toto tempore quo consulatus duravit.’

⁶⁸ *De regimine principum*, IV.13.6: ‘Item statuit quod totus populus, videlicet tam bellatores, quam artifices, quam etiam agricolae, principem eligerent: nolebat enim principem per successionem, quemadmodum pro maiori parte observant civitates Italiae.’

to the Kosmoi, giving the people no role and thus stirring up jealousy and hatred. The Spartans handled this somewhat better, since they chose the king from the Ephors, who in turn came from the people. He concludes: 'It seems to be consonant with reason that he was elevated to the government of the people with the consent of all counsel, as today is common in Italian cities [...]. [I]t indeed seems reasonable that it ought to search for its government from the separate kinds of citizen, since the merits of individuals are necessary for the state of civil government'.⁶⁹ Though Tolomeo appears to be conflating two things here — election of rulers and eligibility of all for office — it is clear that he thought that both should pertain in some fashion to the people, and that this was actually done in northern Italy, or at least Tuscany.

Finally, Tolomeo also tries to account for the vestigial imperial officials still found in northern Italy, which do not fit into the political schema he outlines. He mentions specifically Vavassals (high-ranking regal vassals) and Captains, whom he says are also known as Procers (great men of a royal court). They are anachronisms who have been marginalized and do not really matter these days, he writes, not proper parts of the government: 'They have jurisdiction over subjects, although today, through the might of the cities, their jurisdiction has been diminished or even totally eliminated.'⁷⁰

All these comparisons make it clear that the northern Italian cities, at least the best governed ones, were not merely examples of the political mode that could be found in cities throughout Europe and the world, but were formed in the image of the Roman Republic in its optimal period. They were not merely political, depending upon the many, but had evolved structures representing the various interests and classes in the city, just as Rome did. They had not received their institutions from a primordial lawgiver, but evolved them over time, as those who were formerly unrepresented struggled to take part. The result of this process, as both Polybius and Machiavelli believed, was a stable organism that with the proper cultivation could withstand the pressures of time and fulfil Tolomeo's vision of harmony and permanence that I cited at length previously, in which all the parts of the body politic worked together in their appointed roles for the

⁶⁹ *De regimine principum*, IV.18.3: 'Videbatur consonum rationi, ut consensu totius consilii assumpti ad regimen populi fieret rex, ut hodie communiter faciunt civitates Italiae [...]. Rationabile quidem videtur ad regimen eius de singulis generibus civium debere requiri, prout exigunt merita singulorum, ac civilis regiminis status.'

⁷⁰ *De regimine principum*, III.22.7: 'iurisdictionem super subditos habentes: quamvis hodie per civitatum potentiam sit diminuta vel subtracta totaliter.'

common good. Since many cities were failing to achieve this ideal during Tolomeo's life, we must see him as one who wanted to urge his fellow citizens to end the factionalism that to him was the major factor impeding the realization of his vision. Implicit in Tolomeo's view of the evolving polity is the benefit of the mixed constitution of the type he had ascribed to Rome.

In *De regimine principum*, he does not directly discuss the party struggles in northern Italy, though we know from *Annales* that these were of concern to him. It is difficult not to read his judgement that the internal strife leading to civil war was the most significant factor in bringing down the Roman Republic, otherwise than as an implicit warning to contemporary Italian city-states that their continued factionalism could lead to despotism. He does identify one specific area in which the Italian city-states fell short of Rome: the payment of wages to Italian officials. This was one of the characteristics of political rule in general, but he held the voluntary poverty of his Roman republican heroes in even higher regard. In contrast, 'today in Italy all ministers, like the lords, are mercenaries and therefore act for their own gain, like those contracted for a wage who have determined from the start that their end is the wage itself, not the utility of the subjects. But when they acted as ministers for free, as the ancient Romans did, their solicitude was fixed on the republic as their end and so were of profit to it.'⁷¹ Tolomeo was calling on the well-to-do citizens of the cities to imitate their Roman predecessors and mendicant contemporaries and once again turn from narrow self-interest to selfless service to community and the common good.

⁷¹ *De regimine principum*, II.10.2: 'Hodie in Italia omnes sunt mercenarii sicut et domini, et ideo agunt sicut mercede conducti, non ad utilitatem subditorum sed ad lucrum suum, praestituentes in mercede finem. Quando vero gratis ministrabant, ut antiqui Romani, tunc eorum sollicitudo figebatur ad rempublicam sicut ad finem, et inde proficiebant.'

CITY GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIC HUMANISM

The selfless service to community and the common good that Tolomeo implored all civic leaders to put above their personal interests and the significant citizen participation in the government of city-states that he emphasized reflect the exceptional sense of political community in the communes of northern Italy. In this milieu emerged the complex of attitudes connected with the celebration of political participation in classical terms, which Hans Baron called civic humanism. He continues to be one of the most influential historians of the Italian Renaissance, and his *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* has remained the touchstone of discussions on the relationship of humanism and republicanism for over fifty years. He himself defended his thesis doggedly for the rest of his life, some would say to the point of zealotry, yet he could not prevent the eventual disproof of many of his arguments for dating key documents. The result is that his chronology for the development of civic humanism can no longer be accepted, nor his attribution of its emergence and development to local factors in Florence. Nevertheless, most scholars feel that the concept is useful in understanding Italian civic culture and the evolution of republican political thought. In a 1995 review article, James Hankins, who has since edited a book on civic humanism, argues that we should use it in an even more generalized way; he concedes some validity to the concept, but thinks it needs to include non-republican thought as well:

If we continue to use the term 'civic humanist', it should be clearly recognized that the attempt to reform and revalorize the life of the city-state in accordance with ancient models [...] was never confined to Renaissance republics [...]. It is a style of thought inherited from ancient Rome [...] [which] aims at the reform of political communities generally by improving the moral behavior of their ruling elites [...]. If Baron was wrong to read his humanists as fervent partisans of republicanism, he was correct in seeing that humanism, as a cultural program, sought more than the cultivation of the individual. It

aimed also to bring scholarship and learning to bear on the task of building the virtues necessary to the preservation of civil society.¹

In a more recent article, Hankins argues for the flourishing of civic humanist ideas in Renaissance signories, Milan in particular.² In contrast, Baron wrote almost exclusively about Renaissance Florence, which he saw as the font of humanism and republicanism. He rejected the evolutionary view that accumulation of knowledge and increase of philological skills led to a continuous development of humanism between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Instead, he saw a rupture in continuity of such magnitude that it marked the transition between the medieval worldview and that of the nascent Renaissance.³

Even keeping civic humanism within republican bounds, Baron's chronology was vulnerable to attack, and especially his unyielding contention that before 1402 in Florence nothing that fit his definition of civic humanism existed, and certainly not as early as around 1300, when Tolomeo finished *De regimine principum*. In *Crisis*, Baron addresses Tolomeo's republicanism, only to dismiss any claims that it could be considered an early manifestation of civic humanism. He admits that one could detect a civic-minded attitude, similar to that in Bruni's *Laudatio*, as early as the thirteenth century and that Tolomeo shows 'an astonishing openness of mind toward the role played by free city-republics in the ancient world [...] [and formed] the clear-cut judgement that the power of Rome had been built up under the consuls and free councils of the Republic'.⁴ But for Baron this fell short of a true appreciation for the Roman Republic over

¹ James Hankins, 'The "Baron Thesis" After Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995), 309–38 (pp. 329–30). The year after this article appeared, there was a forum on Baron's legacy in the *American Historical Review*, 101 (1996), 107–44. Much of the material in this chapter comes from my contribution, "Civic Humanism" and Medieval Political Thought', to Hankins's edited volume, *Renaissance Civic Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 30–74, and the article I co-wrote with John La Salle, 'Was Ptolemy of Lucca a Civic Humanist? Reflections on a Newly Discovered Manuscript of Hans Baron', *History of Political Thought*, 26 (2005), 236–65. Some material also comes from my book *Ideal Government* and my introduction to *On the Government of Rulers*.

² James Hankins, 'De Republica: Civic Humanism in Renaissance Milan (and Other Renaissance Signories)', in *IDecembrio e la tradizione della repubblica di Platone tra medioevo e umanesimo*, ed. by Mario Vegetti and Paolo Passavino (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2005), pp. 485–508.

³ Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966 [rev. of the 1955 edn]).

⁴ Baron, *Crisis*, p. 55.

the Roman Empire: the few examples 'of an early emphasis on the *Respublica Romana* [...] show that the occasional deviation from the medieval view during the Trecento had not yet come close to any coherent critique of the institution of the Empire'. Petrarch, to whom he attributes the 'rediscovery of pre-imperial Rome', expresses merely a form of 'racial nationalism'; Tolomeo simply reflects the republican ideals of the existing northern Italian communes, and 'a new appreciation, or rather, depreciation, of the *Imperium Romanum* is lacking in his *De regimine principum*'.⁵

Above all Baron identifies civic humanism with a fundamental change in values: from the medieval preference for the contemplative life to the Renaissance exaltation of the active and civil life, which was 'increasingly respected as a precondition for the full realization of human nature; action and political engagement, therefore, seemed to represent the only truly humane way of life'. In contrast, medieval thought had 'no access to the later argument — so central to Quattrocento humanists — that virtue must be constantly tested and practised and that contemplative withdrawal causes human nature to fragment'.⁶

For Baron, these new values were intimately connected with a 'new type of historical thinking', which freed the concept of Rome from theological and apocalyptic associations and allowed for a new appreciation of the Roman Republic at the expense of the Roman Empire. This desacralization of Rome allowed for it to be seen as an exemplar for the growth and decay of other states. Part of the reason for the emergence of these ideas around 1400 was that the northern Italian cities, threatened by native Italian monarchies, were dominated by purely secular concerns. Once the supernatural justification for hierarchical government was jettisoned, there were grounds for the appreciation of various kinds of states, particularly the city-state — in which all citizens could take an active role.⁷

Baron believed that the struggle of Florence against Milan around 1400 was the stimulus for the emergence of full-fledged civic humanism, but conceded that the latter built upon Petrarch's rediscovery of republican Rome in the 1340s and Salutati's recovery of Cicero as a patriot and statesman in the late fourteenth century, and drew as well, of course, on the whole late medieval Italian rhetorical tradition. Despite these influences, Baron basically insisted upon a break with

⁵ Baron, *Crisis*, p. 57.

⁶ Hans Baron, 'A Defence of the View of the Quattrocento First Offered in *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*', in Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), II, 195–96.

⁷ Baron, *Crisis*, pp. 195–97.

medieval thought, tradition, and world outlook. He insisted that this occurred later than many other Renaissance historians postulated and had been brought about by the alleged 'big and decisive changes' around 1400 in art and philosophy as well as politics.⁸

In his enormously influential *The Machiavellian Moment*, J. G. A. Pocock identifies a similar disjunction between medieval and Renaissance thought with regard to the concept of the citizen. 'It can be argued', he writes, 'that the ideal of the citizen implied a totally different conceptualization of the modes of political knowledge and action from that implicit in the scholastic-customary framework.' A few pages later, he adds: 'To affirm the republic, then, was to break up the timeless hierarchic universe into particular moments.'⁹ Years later, Pocock took up Baron's theme of desacralization of the Roman Empire and the development of a historical narrative of 'decline and fall', in his massive study of what could be called the 'Gibbonian Moment'. He found the first coherent statement of this in the work of Leonardo Bruni, the key Florentine in Baron's account and underlined the importance of this correlation, in the beginning of his chapter on Bruni:

If it can be established that an abandonment of *translatio* for *declinatio* occurred within the same narrative as that recounted by Baron, we shall have evidence that a breach of some kind occurred and can proceed to enquire whether it was connected with a new understanding of republican liberty and citizenship.¹⁰

In contrast, much recent work by both medievalists and Renaissance historians has stressed the continuity of political thought from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Although there has been much recent debate on the question of whether or not these historians have anachronistically identified the thought of disparate periods, it nevertheless seems clear to me that a great deal of continuity exists. While a very few scholars may believe in absolute breaks with previous thought or the persistence of ideas unchanged over millennia, most do not, and to my way of thinking much of the controversy could have been avoided if those of us who argued for continuity had been more clear that we did not see anything approaching an identity of outlook over the centuries and if those on the other side had not been overzealous in attributing this view to us.¹¹ Of course, it is also

⁸ Baron, *Crisis*, p. 3.

⁹ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 49, 54.

¹⁰ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 54; Pocock, *First Decline and Fall*, p. 155.

¹¹ For a survey and bibliography of this controversy, see Francis Oakley, 'Nederman, Conciliar Theory and Constitutionalism: *Sed Contra*', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), 1–19, and

true that believers in continuity have too much portrayed other scholars as denying any continuity.

'Debates over periodization', according to Charles S. Maier, 'usually follow a predictable and sometimes dreary course.' The periodizers insist on a decisive break, while their opponents point to earlier manifestations of the phenomena used as criteria for the periodization. The question, of course, is if and when the phenomena move from a marginal to a defining position in the society, 'or, as Marxists liked to ask, when do changes in quantity become changes in quality'.¹² Extremists such as Baron, on the one side, are rarely willing to admit even a single earlier manifestation of their pet idea, or his opposites, if any, on the other, even a single substantial innovation.

Instead of identity or total disjuncture, what we see again and again is political theorists of various periods putting a new emphasis on some aspect of an earlier theory, or twisting its meaning, or reinterpreting it in new historical circumstances, and thereby creating a new paradigm partially or largely out of old elements. While it is true, for example, that the civic consciousness of fifteenth-century Florence, or at least northern Italy from the late fourteenth century on, represented something considerably different from what had existed before, none of Baron's indicia for civic humanism were lacking in the thought of some late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scholastic writers. In the thought of one of these writers, Tolomeo Fiadoni, we can find almost all of them. It is also true that Renaissance humanists are considerably more elitist and share more characteristics with their medieval predecessors than the concept of civic humanism would suggest. In the end, no theory of either complete continuity or complete disjunction can have much credibility.¹³

Cary Nederman's reply, 'Constitutionalism — Medieval and Modern: Against Neo-Figgisite Orthodoxy (Again)', *History of Political Thought*, 17 (1996), 179–94. Nederman has written widely about this and other relevant issues. Many of his articles have now been collected in his *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits: Classical Traditions in Moral & Political Philosophy, 12–15th Centuries* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1997).

¹² Charles S. Maier, 'Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), 807–31 (p. 810). Marxists, of course, still like to ask this question, while they are waiting out the current reactionary period.

¹³ For a discussion of other aspects of the Baron thesis, see Paul O. Kristeller, 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance' and 'The Humanist Movement', in *Renaissance Thought and its Sources*, ed. by M. Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 85–105 and 21–32, respectively; Ronald Witt, 'Medieval *Ars Dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 35 (1982), 1–35; Quentin Skinner,

Since I wrote my article on the medieval roots of civic humanism, support for my opposition to Baron's chronology has come from an unlikely source: Baron himself. Years before the publication of *Crisis*, in his unpublished 'Ptolemy Paper', he had reached a very different conclusion about Tolomeo's republicanism, viz., that Tolomeo had evolved from a purely medieval thinker to what was essentially a civic humanist in the years between *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum*. In earlier chapters, I summarized some of Baron's arguments for this development in Tolomeo's thought without specifically introducing the subject of civic humanism. Baron's view, coinciding as it does with my own position on Tolomeo's development as a political thinker, specifically in his assimilation of Aristotelian doctrine, supports one of the central theses of this book.

Baron's approach derived from his understanding of the confluence of guelfism and communalism in the thirteenth century, before this unity was shattered in the crises of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries:

For the citizen of the Italian commune in the second half of the thirteenth century, who had not yet lived through these later phases, all signs still seemed to point in one direction — a spiritual as well as political confederacy of papal councils, mendicant movements, and the communal world, for which we have no better label than the term used by Italian students 'guelfismo popolare'.¹⁴

This milieu was one in which someone like Tolomeo could evolve over a period of years from a thoroughly medieval thinker, revealing 'what is still largely the attitude of a monk',¹⁵ to one who initiated and nurtured 'the growth of the still tender politico-historical thought of the Renaissance':¹⁶

In this era of popular guelfism [in] the intellectual climate of the Comune curialist[s], Florentine and Dominican authors who were in close contact with the communal life are able intellectually to build up a house which the citizen could accept as well fit [*sic*] in spirit to his own needs. Yet when he settled down in it, he immediately began to change detail after detail, without realizing the broader implications of these inner changes, but going on consistently until the architecture of that whole building was changed — until what had been first a curialistic and medieval world had become truly a citizen's world.

'Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the Pre-humanist Origins of Republican Ideas', in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. by Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 121–41; Jerrold Seigel, "'Civic Humanism" or Ciceronian Rhetoric? The Culture of Petrarch and Bruni', *Past and Present*, 34 (1966), 3–48, and *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

¹⁴ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', pp. 67–68 (52–53).

¹⁵ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 62 (47).

¹⁶ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 71 (56).

This process of replacement and change of emphasis from within from 'guelfismo popolare' to humanism is one of the most essential chapters in the growth of the ethos and politico-historical outlook of the Renaissance, and there is no more revealing scrutiny of this process but to observe the gradual secularization of the guelf mind throughout the phases of Tolomeo's work.¹⁷

In this chapter, I will use Baron's argument for Tolomeo as a civic humanist as the framework for my examination of several of the most important issues involved. Baron discusses in detail only the first two of four themes that he proposes as especially significant for Tolomeo's intellectual development in the years between *De iurisdictione imperii* to *De regimine principum* — the power of the emperors circumscribed by the Senate, the re-evaluation of kingship, the application of poverty to government, and the virtue of the love of fatherland.¹⁸ Baron emphasizes the importance of biblical sources, something he saw as typical of the medieval practice of testing political theories using the Old Testament. In this case the Scriptures thereby served as a 'midwife' in the transition between the medieval and the Renaissance outlook on Roman history. Directly contradicting the assumptions in his published work, he assumes that it was possible that Tolomeo could come to views akin to civic humanism from biblical interpretation instead of direct appreciation of classical republican texts.

I have already dealt at some length with Baron's discussion of point one, as well as the subject matter of point two, though not Baron's interpretation of it. Baron relates Tolomeo's changing view of kingship to his interpretation of key biblical texts, as I do in my article on Tolomeo and the *Politics*.¹⁹ But whereas I relate the transformation to the increasing influence of Aristotle, Baron makes a complementary appeal to the incompatibility of kingship with Tolomeo's Guelph mentality. In particular, Baron writes, Tolomeo could not accept Thomas Aquinas's monarchical, even if mixed constitutional, view of the best government. Consequently, he could not accept Thomas's analysis either of the ancient

¹⁷ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 68 (53).

¹⁸ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', pp. 68–75 (53–60). Baron never again referred to the last two points, though his relatively contemporary article 'Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth as Factors in the Rise of Humanistic Thought', *Speculum*, 13 (1938), 1–37, suggests, without directly mentioning Tolomeo, that point about poverty might be one area in which Baron felt that Tolomeo advanced toward civic humanism without completely attaining it. Baron revised this article late in life, with consequences we will discuss later. See Hans Baron, 'Franciscan Poverty and Civic Wealth in the Shaping of Trecento Humanistic Thought', in Baron, *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism* (see n. 6, above), 1, 134–57.

¹⁹ Blythe, 'Aristotle's *Politics*'.

Hebrew government under Moses, whom he portrayed as an effective king in a mixed constitution, or of the Judges, such as Samuel, whom he considered to be ineffective because they were not monarchs. Thus, Baron says, Tolomeo was forced to go back to the same sources and re-evaluate them. As he did so in the course of composing *De regimine principum*, he was led to the institutional solutions a free people must find in order to govern itself well, and thereby to the organs of the Roman Republic that enabled the ancient Romans to succeed.

In the case of Samuel, Tolomeo praises the Judges' political rule while condemning the anointing of a king as the beginning of tyranny. In the case of Moses, Tolomeo refuses to identify him as a monarch, and identifies his government and that of the Judges as exemplars 'of the way a free people must produce agencies of self-government'.²⁰ Baron never explicitly enumerates the differences between this account and that in *De iurisdictione imperii*, but since he argues for a radical change between the two books, he must have had something like the following in mind. In *De iurisdictione imperii*, Moses was still treated as a king, though one surrounded by advisors. Above all, this is clear in the comparison there of Moses' government to that of the pope, both described in terms that suggest Thomas Aquinas's mixed constitution. Likewise, in *De iurisdictione imperii*'s interpretation of Samuel, the displeasure of God when the people asked for a king stemmed not from aversion to monarchy in any way, but from anger that the ungrateful people preferred human power over themselves to divine. Baron comments:

The reevaluation and reinterpretation of this second account [in Samuel] was, in the guelph world, in fact the indispensable condition for any definite re-appreciation of the phases of free government in Greek and human history. The path to the *Respublica Romana* was bound to start from the discovery of the early Hebrew commonwealth.²¹

Central to the changes alleged in both point one and two is Tolomeo's evolving concept of the distinction between political and regal rule, which had the effect in *De regimine principum* of valorizing republican government. Indeed, though Baron does not mention it, the word *political* occurs only twice in *De iurisdictione imperii* (and both these references are in the same sentence), referring to the goals of the 'earthly kingdom', and its use there is the generic one, pertaining to civil affairs in general and not specifically to this distinction.²² Baron

²⁰ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', pp. 73–74 (58–59).

²¹ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 73 (58).

²² *De iurisdictione imperii*, chap. 28, p. 57: 'philosophus in Ethicis in hoc felicitatem politicam dicit consistere, ad quam ceteras virtutes politicas civiles disponit'.

stresses the importance and inevitability of the Bible in Tolomeo's development in the direction of civic humanism:

In a world in which it could happen that a writer who was an intimate disciple of Aquinas and guided by Christianity in historical matters, approached the Roman constitution from a side-glance in the Bible, vitality of interest and originality of thought was so completely on the side of the study of the Bible that a 'regimen politicum' could not be differentiated from the 'regimen regale' in Roman history, until it had been found and studied in the Biblical world.²³

Point three concerns Tolomeo's changing view of the role of wealth. Interestingly enough it is in Baron's extensive revision of his 1938 article on Franciscan poverty and civic wealth for *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism* that he gives his most substantial published treatment of Tolomeo, but only to deny him decisively any claim to being a civic humanist. In the earlier version of the article he had argued that humanists of the fourteenth century after Petrarch had been unable to break from the purely medieval and mendicant idea of poverty as an ideal and embrace the wealth and commerce of the Italian city-states, and that they had persisted, in the face of contrary evidence, in interpreting Cicero and other Roman republican writers in a way that supported this ideal. In the later version he attempts to seek the roots of this new outlook in early fourteenth-century Dominican writers, and particularly in Tolomeo. Unlike the humanists who shared his view of poverty, Baron argues, Tolomeo represented 'a prelude entirely medieval in tone [...]. An unusual interest in Rome and in the literary memory of Rome's greatness did not, however, turn Tolomeo into a proto-humanist. His admiration of Rome's republican form of government [...] was based on occasional comments in the Second Book of Maccabees [actually I Maccabees], not on authentic Roman sources [...]. [His misreading of ancient authors] shows him far from having even the rudiments of humanistic historical knowledge.'²⁴ Now we know that in his Ptolemy Paper Baron would not have agreed with this later assessment, but at the same time, Tolomeo's embrace of poverty disqualified him, under the assumptions of the 1938 article, from being a full civic humanist. By the time of *Crisis*, and even more *In Search of Florentine Civic Humanism*, this defect had become decisive, and Baron considered Tolomeo purely medieval, with little or nothing in common with civic humanism.

We have to assume that the evolution of Baron's thought went something like this: in 1938 he believed that the fourteenth-century humanists were held back

²³ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 71 (56).

²⁴ Baron, 'Franciscan Poverty' (1988), pp. 199–200.

by an anachronistic, medieval dislike of wealth. At that time he likely had little knowledge of Tolomeo, since if he had he surely would have mentioned him. In the succeeding few years he read *De regimine principum* and other medieval political texts and began to think that the Dominican ideas of voluntary poverty as applied to politics, while not humanist, were at least an innovative step away from the medieval privileging of the spiritual and contemplative life and fostered concern for active political participation and pursuit of the common good as equally valid activities. Thus these ideas served as a bridge to civic humanism, and when combined in Tolomeo with an appreciation of the Roman Republic and republicanism in general, this resulted in something approaching civic humanism. Later, when he became convinced of the pivotal significance of Florence and 1402, the medieval aspects of Tolomeo's thought, including his ideas on poverty, but also the biblical sources for his republicanism and the Christianization of the civic virtues, came to the fore, and he felt compelled to retreat from his earlier treatment of Tolomeo as almost a civic humanist.

Point four is the most enigmatic; the complete text is 'III.4 supplemented into *Amor patriae*'. However, I think Baron's intent is clear, something similar to what I argued earlier with reference to Aristotle, that Tolomeo's justification of Roman rule shifted from an emphasis on the Roman heroes' virtue as centred in their desire to preserve the republic to ideas of community and the common good.

In contrast to *De regimine principum*, *De iurisdictione imperii*, in addition to not mentioning the common good, nor any idea that the civic virtues were of the same order as the traditional Christian virtues, places greater emphasis on the idea that personal virtue not necessarily directed to the republic led to God's approval of Roman rule, rather than that their civic virtue led through natural causes to a successful empire. Baron certainly was aware of the last of these, and probably of the others, for he comments on this in the context of the markedly different attitude toward the civic virtues in the two works.²⁵ Most likely, he would have interpreted them more in the spirit of civic humanism than Aristotelianism, and he admits as much about Tolomeo's later views in his revision of a 1938 article on Cicero in *In Search of Renaissance Civic Humanism*:

But Cicero now began to be recognized along with Aristotle as the most effective guide to civic obligations. When Tolomeo of Lucca asked why God had allowed the pagan Romans of Antiquity to build their world empire, he concluded that more than any people they had been guided by *amor patriae*. Love of one's country is 'the most meritorious of all virtues', he insisted, because 'zeal for the common good' tends toward the same

²⁵ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 65 (50).

end as the divine commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. Like God's commandment, therefore, the call of the *patria* admits of no exception. 'This is why Tullius [Cicero] says in reference to the *respublica*, that nothing which prevents you from answering the summons of your country must be permitted to stand in your way'. In the *De Officiis*, Tolomeo pointed out, 'the *respublica* is considered the most gratifying and most valuable of all human associations', because Cicero says that love of relatives and friends, and of anything else, 'is encompassed by the love of one's *patria*'.²⁶

Thus, even in his published works, Baron admits that beginning around 1300, in Italy at least, Cicero achieved a pervasive influence on a par with that of Aristotle. He mentions also Tolomeo's fellow Dominican, Remigio dei Girolami, and comments that their writings 'allow us to trace in detail how devotion to the community was preached from the pulpits and how it influenced contemporary writings on politics and history'.²⁷ Nevertheless, in this later work, Baron regards this attention to Cicero as merely the first reawakening of Roman republican values not in any way identifiable with civic humanism. He felt that Cicero's political career, about which little was known in 1300, but which Petrarch uncovered in 1345, was unacceptable to the medieval preference for the contemplative life and even to Petrarch's sometime-ideal of intellectual leisure. It was only Salutati and Bruni, according to Baron, who rescued Cicero the politician and praised exactly those traits to which Petrarch objected. Baron attempted to demonstrate 'how the aspect of Cicero the Roman citizen and thinker was but timidly recognized throughout the medieval centuries, only to be seized upon in the Quattrocento by humanists as an essential aid in their efforts to break away from many of the assumptions held during the Middle Ages'.²⁸

These arguments are not completely convincing. Tolomeo did not share the alleged devotion of medieval writers to the contemplative life; further, however much this may have been a feature of religious writing, it is simply missing from the political writings of the scholastic philosophers in general. Although they may not have praised the participatory life to the degree that the civic humanists did, and although many of them may have chosen the contemplative life for themselves, they did not criticize participation as a second-rate activity, as did the Fathers and writers of the early Middle Ages. Further, Tolomeo's citations of

²⁶ Hans Baron, 'The Memory of Cicero's Roman Civic Spirit in the Medieval Centuries and in the Florentine Renaissance', in Baron, *In Search of Florentine* (see n. 6, above), I, 94–133 (p. 114), citing *De regimine principum*, III.4.

²⁷ Baron, 'Memory of Cicero's Roman Civic Spirit', p. 114.

²⁸ Baron, 'Memory of Cicero's Roman Civic Spirit', p. 97.

Cicero show that he did understand the civic political message. I suspect that Baron would have stated the case for Tolomeo's prescience much more strongly had he completed his manuscript. His original 1938 article on Cicero does not mention Tolomeo; had Baron known of his work then his conclusion would probably have been quite different from that in the later version.

Everything that Baron presents in his 'Ptolemy Paper' supports my contention that Tolomeo evolved significantly between *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De regimine principum*, and in so doing incidentally supports the traditional dating of these two treatises as separated by two decades.²⁹ There is no doubt that over the period between them Tolomeo became increasingly hostile to monarchy and more closely embraced the republicanism of northern Italy and other places, both contemporary and historical, in which republicanism had flourished. Baron would always have agreed with these assertions, though he would come to change his mind on their interpretation and their connection to the later Florentine thinkers on whom his work centred. It remains to consider exactly how far this view of the later Tolomeo accorded with Baron's definition of civic humanism. Since Baron had not yet formulated his mature definition of this phenomenon, he did not directly address it in the 'Ptolemy Paper'.

To a large degree I have already addressed Baron's chief criterion with respect to the attitude toward ancient Rome, and the requirement that the Roman Republic be praised for itself and at the expense of the empire. We have seen how Tolomeo's conception of the Roman Empire, and perhaps even that of Thomas Aquinas, if he wrote the section of *De regimine principum* (Book I, Chapter 5) usually ascribed to him, but viewed as Tolomeo's interpolation by Baron, incorporated some of the very elements that Baron said were missing before civic humanism.³⁰ The republic represented the active involvement of a citizen body, and its success was largely due to the virtue of these citizens working ardently for it and liberty; conversely, it was only after virtue failed and dissension ensued that this liberty could be taken away. We have also seen how Tolomeo constantly used Rome as an exemplar for the growth and decay of other polities, another characteristic of Baron's civic humanism.

²⁹ See Chapter 5 of the companion volume, *Life and Works*, for the controversy over the dating of *De iurisdictione imperii*, usually thought to be from around 1280, but which Jürgen Miethke dated to around 1300.

³⁰ See Chapter 7 of *Life and Works* for Baron's claim that Tolomeo interpolated passages in Thomas's part of *De regimine principum*.

Baron's insistence that the normative medieval theological or apocalyptic approach to the empire was not replaced by a historical one until the fifteenth century is also belied by the facts. Earlier I addressed this question with respect to Pocock. Even putting Tolomeo aside for the moment, my article on medieval civic humanism shows how scholastic writers in particular normally rejected the theological approach and that while some writers did sometimes support the empire, they tended to do so for purely earthly political reasons rather than theological ones. This suggests that Baron was mistaken when he said that medieval thinkers lacked a concern with or understanding of secular historical development, and that it was only the civic humanists who developed a new type of non-theological historical thinking that allowed for a new appreciation of the Roman Republic and its consequent use as an exemplar for the growth and decay of other states. Whatever the merit of their conclusions, medieval thinkers had already begun to seek purely historical explanations, and these explanations were often headed in the same direction that the later humanists would take. Nicolai Rubinstein points out that various translations of Roman historical works into the vernacular, as well as contemporary histories, show that fourteenth-century Italians were both increasingly interested in and knowledgeable about ancient Roman history, and, more significantly, that contemporary 'political thinkers considered [...] history [...] relevant to the political problems of their time and coloured it with their own political preoccupations and ideals'. As a result, Rome came to be seen as a model for political organization and an object lesson in the rise and decline of political fortunes. This can be found not only in the works of scholars like Tolomeo and Thomas but also in poems, chronicles, sermons, speeches, and the products of civic chanceries. By the mid-thirteenth century, as Rubinstein notes, there are many examples of using an analysis of the connection between Roman internal discord and its decline to warn against the civic factionalism in Italy.³¹

I also must repeat the point that Tolomeo and other scholastic writers normally gave citations of the Bible more as support or illustration of ideas or conclusions reached by reason, or to provide a basis for discussion through reason. We have seen the perfect example of this, as Baron understood in the 'Ptolemy Paper' but not in *Crisis*, in Tolomeo's musings on seemingly contradictory models of kingship in the Bible.³² The texts provide the basis for a purely secular discussion

³¹ Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Political Theories in the Renaissance', in *The Renaissance: Essays in Interpretation*, ed. by Andre Chastel and others (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 153–200 (pp. 161–62).

³² *De regimine principum*, III.11.

of the nature of monarchy, the conclusions of which illuminate the texts. But biblical texts are rarely used to make an assertion about the nature of government that is unsupported by secular political ideas.

Of course, we have also seen that Tolomeo did include Rome in an apocalyptic schema, but also that the manner in which he did this ensured that after the time of Christ the Roman Empire no longer had this apocalyptic role. To be sure, Tolomeo gave the medieval empire a somewhat privileged role as an adjunct to the papal monarchy and defender of the church. He wrote that most Christian emperors obeyed the pope in both secular and theological matters,³³ and transmitted and developed the theory of papal translation of the empire when this was necessary to defend the church: from the Greeks to the Franks, from the Franks to the Saxons, and finally from the Saxons to the Germans.³⁴ But he also knew that the emperor need not, and has not, always subordinated himself to the church, and never alleged that the empire would last until the end of this Age or Christ's Second Coming; on the contrary, he wrote that it will last as long as the Roman Church considers this expedient for the Christian people. Only the church is guaranteed to last to the end and beyond. But as agents of the pope, whose regal powers are exempt from the defects of secular monarchy, since they are divinely established for God's vicar, emperors, when they are fulfilling their proper function, would also properly have monarchical powers, according to Tolomeo's principle of subordinate power.³⁵ This would allow a universal, though not necessarily permanent, still less apocalyptic, role for the Roman Empire in preserving the church from harm, ending factionalism and inter-city strife, and thereby creating the peace necessary for republics to flourish among virtuous peoples. Tolomeo never even went this far, for he never claimed that the emperor had power within the territories of established states like France or England. He supported the empire for practical reasons and did not use teleological language in writing about it.

Neither did the special aura of the Roman Empire disappear in the Renaissance. Humanist imperialists such as Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini continued to give it a central place, but they too would defend it by rational arguments such as its utility or Roman virtue, and God would be brought in only to give his *a posteriori* blessing to a purely human community. Just as there was a pre-humanist attack on

³³ *De regimine principum*, III.17–18.

³⁴ *De regimine principum*, III.19.1–2.

³⁵ *De regimine principum*, III.22.6–8.

empire exemplified by Tolomeo, Piccolomini demonstrated that there can be a humanist defence of empire, couched in terms of virtue, which Baron saw only in defence of republicanism.³⁶ As a number of authors have argued, the ideals of civic humanism seem quite flexible, applicable even to Renaissance despotisms. The Renaissance may have brought a greater appreciation of the republic at the expense of the empire, but it did not bring either a greater appreciation of the republic per se, or a greater desacralization of the empire. Both were well established in the Middle Ages, the first by the twelfth century and the second from the late thirteenth century. Tolomeo is important as the first person to put both things together in a coherent and historical account of ancient Rome.

In short, except for the elevation of rhetoric as the highest calling of a statesman and a more positive evaluation of the accumulation of wealth, Tolomeo embodies all of Baron's criteria for civic humanism. In his early manuscript, Baron agrees with this and makes an even stronger claim than I or other medievalists have ever made: that civic humanism already existed in all essentials in the late thirteenth century. Baron also tried to prove that no similar ideas existed before the late work of Tolomeo. This is the main reason that he argued for Tolomeo's interpolations in Thomas Aquinas's part of *De regimine principum*. These revisions could all be characterized as civic humanist, and this supported his thesis: 'Every stone broken out of the present architecture of *De regimine principum* and shown to belong to the reviser, strengthens our reconstruction of the genesis of the ideas of self-government and citizenship in a phase of the [Commune] in which the evidence of sources is still dim and scarce.'³⁷ What Baron meant here is not that the 'interpolated' passages add anything to our understanding of Tolomeo's political views as expressed in the later books, since they do not (in fact, Baron uses their similarity to Tolomeo's ideas to argue that Tolomeo wrote them), but that if he could show them to be written around 1300 and not in the late 1260s or early 1270s, when Thomas wrote, he could argue for the emergence of the civic humanist ideology after that period in the works of Tolomeo Fiadoni, and then possibly among others whose thoughts have not survived.

³⁶ Cary Nederman discusses Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini's imperialism and humanism in two articles: 'Humanism and Empire: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Cicero, and the Imperial Ideal', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 499–515, and 'National Sovereignty and Ciceronian Political Thought: Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini and the Ideal of Universal Empire in Fifteenth-Century Europe', *History of European Ideas*, 16 (1993), 537–43.

³⁷ Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 28 (14).

As John La Salle and I suggest, an equally likely explanation for the fact that passages of the first part of *De regimine principum* seem similar to ones from the second portion is that Tolomeo built upon and transformed the rudimentary republican arguments that he found in Thomas's writing. Thomas was not incapable of republican sentiments, though these did not form the centre of his thought. They became much more central for Tolomeo and this made him a more pivotal figure in the evolution civic humanism. His concepts of the Roman Republic, monarchy, self-government, and political rule, among others, were highly innovative, yet they built on what had come before. There is no definite evidence that his writings stand in a direct line to Baron's later heroes, like Leonardo Bruni, but ideas like Tolomeo's were in the air in northern Italy around 1300, and over the next century they developed in still other innovative ways. Unlike Baron, La Salle and I did not wish to point to a certain time, place, or person and say, 'Here for the first time is civic humanism; what came before was purely medieval.'

That these are even questions stems from Baron's well-known tendency to posit critical turning points and his attraction to either/or analyses. His attempt to date the emergence of republican ideas related to civic humanism to the period after Thomas's death and solely to northern Italy is in many ways reminiscent of what he later tried to do in *Crisis*: ban any real expression of these things until after 1402. His relegation of Tolomeo to a purely medieval perspective with no real historical understanding of the sentiments he sometimes expressed is quite similar to what he did in the 'Ptolemy Paper' with the clear republican sentiments of Bonaventura, who, he claims, was unable to 'wring any clear idea of the Respublica out of the fantastic medieval legends'.³⁸ This is what Baron, no doubt sincerely, did time and again in his career: he would decide that a certain time was the critical one for the development of some idea, and then insist that anything from an earlier date that sounded similar must really be something quite different. This is why he was always so tenacious in sticking to his dating of key documents. But history is not as tidy as Baron would wish; though doubtless certain events or milieus may be pivotal for the emergence of ideologies, these ideologies never come forth fully formed, and we almost always can trace a more or less continuous development of ideas as they emerge and change over a period of centuries.

³⁸ See La Salle and Blythe, 'Did Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca) Insert "Civic Humanist" Ideas into Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Kingship?'; Baron, 'Ptolemy Paper', p. 46 (31). Bonaventura, *Collationes in hexamera*, v.19, in *Opera omnia*, 10 vols (Quaracchi, 1882–1901), v, 329–449 (p. 357), writes: 'As long as the Romans chose those who were in charge, they chose the wisest men and then the republic was guided well governed. But after they adopted succession, it was completely destroyed.'

Republican ideas never totally disappeared, and they were preserved even in Christian texts, like Augustine's *City of God*, that sought to denigrate human politics. Italian civic life never completely disintegrated after the fall of Rome, and as the communal life evolved from the eleventh century on these republican ideas came more and more to be recalled and the life and heroes of the Roman Republic to be valorized. Republican theory, though sadly not republican reality, may have reached its height in oligarchic fifteenth-century Florence, but its flourishing built upon the struggles for republican government in the preceding centuries. Tolomeo Fiadoni was extremely important in this process, but he was not the first medieval writer either to express genuinely republican ideas, nor was he the first to show appreciation for the Roman Republic. And though there was great development in his way of thinking, his positive attitude toward republics in general and the Roman Republic in particular did not suddenly emerge from a monarchical-imperial worldview but had its inception in his childhood experience as a member of a middle-class burgher family in republican Lucca. It was only his explanation of his preferences for republicanism, their grounding in Aristotelian or civic humanist language, and his historical understanding of other polities, especially that of Rome, that changed.

Beyond the chronological impediment, there are other assumptions that inhibit Baron's understanding of medieval thought. One of these, which I have often pointed out as a common mistake, involves first of all an unjustified opposition of northern Italian republican and northern European monarchical political thought and more fundamentally a related 'tendency to equate non-monarchical and republican government and to distinguish sharply between monarchical and republican government', which, 'except for Tolomeo Fiadoni [...] is problematic with respect to medieval political thought; perhaps it is Baron's artificial demands that blind him to medieval thought that could be considered republican'.³⁹ This was written before the 'Ptolemy Paper' came to light, in which Baron extends the umbrella of civic humanism at least partially over Tolomeo Fiadoni. Even in *Crisis* he accepts that Tolomeo and other northern Italians had some republican ideas, but relegates them to a separate and inferior category of medieval republicanism. It was only conceivable for Baron to consider Tolomeo a budding civic humanist because he was a northern Italian and hostile to monarchy.

It is certainly true that popular works, chronicles, speeches, public correspondence, and the like show that there was a much greater interest in republican ideas in Italian cities than elsewhere. Yet scholars throughout Europe travelled widely

³⁹ Blythe, 'Civic Humanism', p. 54.

to study and teach at universities and to carry out the business of the church and their clerical orders and drew on a common education and common readings in Aristotelian and other republican political works. So we should not be surprised that in many cases they came to conclusions that are not predictable from their place of birth. Even northern proponents of monarchy were aware of the political situation in Italian cities, understood their affinity with the ancient Greek city-states, and often used Italian republican examples in attempting to understand or apply Aristotelian principles. They were also quite capable of defending republicanism or of incorporating republican principles into their theories of monarchy.⁴⁰

This blending of monarchist and republican ideology suggests that the words *monarchist* and *republican* do not in themselves sufficiently characterize a writer's attitude toward participation in government. Therefore, the common practice of treating Engelbert von Admont, Nicole Oresme, and John of Paris, to name only a few, simply as northern monarchists and of contrasting them with purported Italian republicans such as Tolomeo Fiadoni and Marsilius of Padua, as Quentin Skinner tended to do, does not make sense. It makes even less sense (considering the writings of John of Paris, Engelbert von Admont, and Pierre d'Auvergne, among others) to say, as he did, that 'in the half-century after Moerbeke's translation began to be widely used, almost all the original and influential adaptations of Aristotle's ideas came from Italian writers'.⁴¹ Most confusing of all is his treatment of Thomas Aquinas, whom Skinner classifies as an Italian, and as such therefore presumably more receptive to the republican perspective, yet it is not clear why this should be so, since Aquinas was raised in southern Italy in one of the most centralized monarchies in Europe. Each writer developed ideas somewhat differently because of specific political experiences and contingencies, and this certainly is important, but it is not the entire story. Many civic humanist ideas were anticipated both in the north and south, as the writings of northerners like Nicole Oresme, especially, demonstrate.

That Thomas Aquinas, a monarchist and southern Italian, could also express republican ideas seemed impossible to Skinner and Baron. And ultimately for Baron it was difficult for another reason to maintain that civic humanism could

⁴⁰ For a northern contemporary who favoured republican government, see Jean de Hocsem (1279–1348), *La Chronique de Jean de Hocsem*, ed. by Godefroid Kurth (Brussels: Kiessling et Cie, 1927).

⁴¹ Quentin Skinner, 'Political Philosophy', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 389–452 (p. 395).

come out of medieval scholasticism, even of the northern Italian republican variety, since this was a school that to him was characterized by its uninspiring prose and dry, systematic logic, which hardly seemed to him an appropriate source of a classical revival. Much more satisfactory to his mindset was the milieu of fourteenth-century northern Italian citizens and their literary circles, which sought to revive and imitate the rhetorical works of classical antiquity, especially for the political propaganda of the city-state chanceries, and were thus exposed to the Roman Republic directly by its ancient Roman apologists. Clearly, this was important in the development of fifteenth-century civic humanism, but it was only one of several streams of influence, another of which was medieval republicanism, like that of Tolomeo Fiadoni.

This is not to say that Tolomeo and other Italian writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were civic humanists in the sense of Bruni and Salutati. Few of the earlier writers were direct participants in the government of a republic. Most were writing from an academic position; for them the political life, however admirable, was not something in which they felt it was necessary for them personally to take part. Those who were committed to political activity were, for the most part, writing as exiles or opponents of the regimes from which they were excluded. From the first group, we do not feel the passion that seems to inform writers such as Bruni and others, and the very real passion of the second group is directed differently from that of the civic humanists. For both groups we have to dig to find those ideas that seem so close to those of civic humanism; they are not omnipresent and insistent. The events of 1402 that Baron feels are so important may well have contributed to the particular manifestation of civic ideas associated with Bruni and early Quattrocento Florence. But he goes too far when he claims that the intellectual elements of this attitude were something new, or that the basic civic attitude was something originally unique to Florence or necessarily bound to anti-monarchical political forms. In this he was closer to the truth in his earlier appreciation of Tolomeo's development in a markedly civic humanist direction.

There is also a sense in which the ideals of Tolomeo were more sincerely republican than those of the later writers. John Najemy has argued persuasively that civic humanist ideas in Florence served as a cover for the decline of actual participation. Starting from the observation that contemporary praise of the practice of civic humanism in fifteenth-century Florence belied the oligarchic reality, Najemy concludes that it developed as a civic myth to silence thirteenth-century guild republicanism and justify the new oligarchic era of participation without power. He writes that civic humanism was 'deeply conservative in its denial of the legitimacy

of class conflict and in its affirmation of a natural leadership of patrician fathers over citizen/children. It may also have served as the intellectual foundation of a culture of conformity and surveillance'.⁴² Najemy points out that civic humanists promoted ideals that were quite different from those of the period of the *popolo*, but they did use and transform those ideals, as well as scholastic theories widely circulated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By so doing, Bruni and other late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writers brought ideas developed in the universities into a form that resonated with the aspirations of the burgeoning Renaissance elite of the Italian cities. But perhaps it was Tolomeo who was more of a real civic humanist in that he, and others like him, more truly represented the ideals of the *popolo*.

⁴² See John Najemy, 'Civic Humanism and Florentine Politics', in *Renaissance Civic Humanism* (see n. 1, above), pp. 75–104.

CONCLUSIONS AND LEGACY

Coming now to the end of the second of two volumes I have written on Tolomeo Fiadoni, it is time to address some basic questions. Has Tolomeo been worth my attention of the past ten years? Will further study be worthwhile for scholars to come? What have I been able to show and what remains to be done? What influence did Tolomeo have on late medieval, early modern, and modern thought? And, most contentious of all, what was his relationship to Aristotle?

I wrote in the prefaces of these volumes that I could not hope to cover in any depth all aspects of Tolomeo's thought, but that two themes had come to play an important role in my narrative: Tolomeo's struggle to reconcile conflicting authorities and the evolution of his thought over time. The struggle characterized much of his thought, but the evolution is evident (to me at least) only in his political thought. Obviously, because this is the area of my greatest knowledge, the one that, whatever else I have said, is the most important for us as historians of ideas, and the one in which Tolomeo made his most original contributions, it is the one that occupied me the most in the analytical sections. While I have tried to put Tolomeo's political views in the context of the other ideas and the social and religious milieu that formed his prejudices and predilections, his likes and dislikes, his attitudes and demeanour, I also realize that this is a very complex and difficult task and that I have not always been able to bring everything together as much as I would have liked. I hope that others will be able to take what I have done much further.

In his review of my translation of *De regimine principum*, John Watts presents Tolomeo as a minor figure not worthy of the claims I made for him. After admitting that the treatise contains some 'novel' and 'suggestive' ideas and that it 'nods at contemporary politics', Watts goes on, 'but for all this, it is too inert, incoherent

and unimaginatively scholarly to be regarded as original in quite the way proposed. Rather it is as one of those second-rate texts, so important in establishing the general context of thought — and of politics more widely — that this work is principally valuable.¹

I am of two minds about these comments. Certainly no sane person would argue that Tolomeo was a deeper thinker than Thomas Aquinas, more sophisticated and subtle in his reasoning, more attuned to classical, Christian, and scholastic philosophy and theology, more consistent in his ideology, more significant for the history of ideas as a whole. There simply is no comparison; Tolomeo is indeed extraordinarily minor with respect to these things. And in his admission of the contextual importance of Tolomeo, Watts is repeating the view well expressed by Nicolai Rubinstein in his defence of Tolomeo and other ‘minor’ writers:

Perhaps the contrast between the two sections of *De regimine principum* provides a pointer for the historian of political thought: works that are related to a particular political background may have a greater interest for him than texts whose statements are designed to be universally applicable. Indeed, their significance for him as evidence will often be in inverse proportion to their general philosophical standing. One might even argue, with some exaggeration, that the very distance from a classic text of political thought can contribute to their value as sources of political ideology. Thus, for our knowledge of that ideology in Florence around 1300 Remigio dei Girolami’s treatises *De bono communi* and *De bono pacis* are far more relevant than Aquinas’s *De regimine principum*.²

But Watt’s attitude, unlike Rubinstein’s, also suggests a misguided prejudice often found in discussions of the medieval contribution to intellectual history: that it suffices to touch on one or two ‘greats’, usually Thomas Aquinas for anything and Marsilius of Padua for political thought, before moving on to the Renaissance (condensed to Machiavelli for political thought) and modern period, leaving the study of lesser figures to specialists of the period. ‘It is unlikely’, Watts adds, ‘that “it could benefit all historians of political thought” or that they should feel obliged to read it.’ I argue that in several ways Tolomeo *is* more significant for the history of political thought than Thomas Aquinas and other major figures, and as such is an important source for all historians of political thought. Although we may not need to study some of Tolomeo’s beliefs, such as regional aptitude for good gov-

¹ John Watts, Review of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca), *On the Government of Rulers*, *History*, 85 (2000), 319.

² Nicolai Rubinstein, ‘Problems of Evidence in the History of Political Ideas’, in *Studies in Italian History in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: 1, Political Thought and the Language of Politics: Art and Politics*, ed. by Giovanni Ciappelli, *Storia e letteratura*, Racolta di studi e testi, 216 (Rome: Edizione di storia e letteratura, 2004), pp. 335–46.

ernment, papal hierarchy, or the Five World Monarchies, for an understanding of modern political thought, there are others, such as the emergence of civic humanism, hatred of monarchy, and love of freedom and republicanism, that are essential. This assertion is not solely a contextual one. Tolomeo does provide a more transparent window into the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Italian republican milieu than Thomas or Marsilius, but — although this is difficult to demonstrate conclusively — he also, in my opinion, played more of a direct part than they in the evolution of modern republicanism, both in formulating a theory for existing government and in providing concepts for later thinkers. In all this he hitched a ride on the reputation of his teacher, with his ideas presented as Thomas's. The elucidation of Tolomeo's influence is one area that I have touched on only briefly and that still needs much work.

Of the recent work that addresses this, one important article, which I mentioned in the preface, is that of David Wootton, which argues that not only was Tolomeo, however inconsistently, the first writer to use 'republic' in the modern sense, as opposed to monarchy, but also that he was ultimately responsible for the modern usage after it was picked up by Florentines at the time of Girolamo Savonarola after two centuries of neglect and shortly after became dominant in Italy by way of Machiavelli, although it did not displace the other meaning for several centuries in the rest of Europe.³

Tracing such a common term through the mass of literature that uses it is a daunting task, and it is still more daunting to decide on Tolomeo's role in each case, making final judgements difficult. It becomes even more difficult after the more classical-sounding *res publica* began to appear more frequently in place of transliterations from the Greek with the humanists of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Although there seems no reason to contest Tolomeo's primacy, it is not at all clear to what degree the term was used in the modern sense between Tolomeo and Machiavelli. While Wootton believes that this line of transmission was the primary one for the ultimate success of the new meaning, he also points to an intermediate vernacular usage, by Leon Battista Alberti in 1437 to mean non-monarchical government, perhaps, he thought, showing Tolomeo's direct influence.⁴ James Hankins, in an article published before Wootton's but after the latter's composition, added some other fifteenth-century examples.⁵

³ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism'.

⁴ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', p. 296 (pdf version, p. 16).

⁵ James Hankins, '*De republica*', pp. 485–508.

Hankins did not realize that Tolomeo sometimes used the term in the modern sense, and began his story in the early fifteenth century. Leonardo Bruni substituted *res publica* for *politia* in his 1438 translation of Aristotle's *Politics* for the general meaning, but did not use it for the specific form Aristotle also called *politia*, in which the many ruled for the common good. Consequently, the humanists depending upon Bruni for their knowledge of Aristotle did not pick it up from him, although in retrospect it is possible to read a passage from Bruni's 'Funeral Oration for Nanni degli Strozzi' of 1427 as distinguishing monarchies from republics.⁶ Hankins suggests that some mid-fifteenth-century texts show awareness of the new meaning, and while this is not completely convincing, he shows conclusively that by the 1470s — in the works of Italian writers such as Giovanni Pontano and Francesco Patrizi — and in the pro-Medici treatise of Raffaele Lippo Brandolini written in the 1490s just before Savonarola rose to prominence, the usage was explicit.⁷

Both Wootton and Hankins suggest that sources other than Tolomeo may have contributed to the new usage, including the rediscovery of Tacitus, who contrasted the Roman Republic with the contemporary principate. Only Salutati and a few Florentines knew any of his works in the early fifteenth century, but he became better known after a printed edition appeared around 1468,⁸ right before the clear usages just mentioned. Hankins adds the common references after 1400 at the latest to Venice, long a model for stable communal government, as the *Respublica Veneta*, and to Milan during its communal revival of 1447–50 as the *Repubblica ambrosiana*.⁹ How — and if — Tolomeo influenced specific later writers is still mostly unclear. With regard to the earlier usages that Hankins notes, and possibly other from that time, it is impossible to say at present. There is a lot of work to do in examining the texts to determine their sources, and none of them exist in modern editions.

The situation is somewhat more clear in the line of transmission that Wootton identifies. Savonarola's unequivocal reliance on Tolomeo, to which I have alluded but not spelled out throughout this book, has long been known, at least since the publication of Donald Weinstein's *Savonarola and Florence* in 1970. Savonarola relied heavily on both parts of *De regimine principum* without displaying any

⁶ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', p. 291 (pdf version, p. 13).

⁷ Hankins, 'De republica', pp. 492–97.

⁸ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', pp. 297–99 (pdf version, p. 17); Hankins, 'De republica', p. 493.

⁹ Hankins, 'De republica', p. 494.

awareness that they were written by different writers, and, in particular, lifted passages almost verbatim, as well as examples, out of Tolomeo's part. He adopted Tolomeo's formulation of regal and political power, his idea that different regions were suited to different kinds of government, and that Italy was most suited to political government. He repeated Tolomeo's argument that except for the doge of Venice, Italian monarchs become tyrants, and he tended to equate human monarchy with despotism. Like Tolomeo, he praised good monarchy but was unable to find a situation in which it could actually exist, although his reasons were a bit different from Tolomeo's. Further, he believed that spiritual development could only be truly successful in a well-governed city.¹⁰

In an earlier book, I asserted that Savonarola departed from Tolomeo and Thomas in his millenarian applications of their theories,¹¹ but I now believe that I was partially wrong with respect to Tolomeo. As I wrote above, although Tolomeo normally wrote in a more naturalistic fashion about politics, he at times depicted civic virtue as of the same kind as and a prerequisite for religious virtue and secular government as central, perhaps even necessary, for salvation. This goal then became the government's principle end, not earthly peace, the earthly common good, or happiness, and therefore politics could be seen as a step toward the City of God. He also wrote about the possibility of constructing a polity so harmonious that it would be free of the contradictions that normally lead to eventual collapse. We may never know whether any of these ideas were instrumental in Savonarola's transformation from a preacher of doom against the sinning Florentines if they did not repent to the prophet of Florence's apotheosis into the New Jerusalem, or whether they merely came to buttress his new approach, but it also now seems almost certain to me that Savonarola, with his visionary temperament, seized upon these few passages in what he believed to be the work of the revered St Thomas and adapted them to his own situation.¹²

One thing Savonarola did not take from Tolomeo was the latter's occasional modern use of the word *republic*; in fact Savonarola almost never used that word. It does not appear in his treatise on Florentine government, and in none of

¹⁰ Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, pp. 290, 293, 302–04, 309.

¹¹ Blythe, *Ideal Government*, pp. 291–92.

¹² See Girolamo Savonarola, 'Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze', ed. by Luigi Firpo, in *Prediche sopra aggeo* (Rome: Belardetti, 1965), pp. 435–87; trans. as *Treatise on the Constitution and Government of Florence*, in *Humanism and Liberty*, ed. by R. N. Watkins (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 231–60 (available electronically at <http://www.classicitaliani.it/quattrocento/savonarola_trattato_firenze.htm> [accessed June 2008]).

his writings does he use it in the modern sense.¹³ This usage did become common in the circle of political thinkers around Savonarola, who were also reading *De regimine principum*. The critical text for Wootton is Bartolomeo Scala's 1496 *Defence against the Critics of Florence*, in which the author essentially reverses Bruni's usage by using 'republic' only for the particular form, occasionally extending its applicability to aristocracy, exactly as Tolomeo did.¹⁴ Scala's ideas in this treatise reproduce those of Savonarola, and, in particular, all those ideas that Savonarola had taken from Tolomeo. Scala's one difference, followed by Machiavelli and other later writers, the substitution of *res publica* for *politia*, Wootton attributes to his humanist revulsion for the transliteration from the Greek, a revulsion not shared by the scholastically trained Savonarola.¹⁵ Machiavelli seems to have combined Tolomean ideas both directly and via Savonarola and his circle with the newly available sixth book of Polybius's *Histories* in which Rome is described as a mixed constitution.

The lines of transmission from Tolomeo to Savonarola and Scala to Machiavelli and then to early modern political thought are well documented. The ties to other Italian writers in the two centuries between Tolomeo's earliest writing and Savonarola are at present much more tenuous and deserving of much closer attention. I have already mentioned the various writers who expressed the opposition of republicanism to monarchy. As another example, Nirit ben Aryeh Debby believes that the views of the Florentine preacher Giovanni Dominici, who wrote in the early fifteenth century, and used the Roman Republic in a theoretical defence of republicanism are 'strongly rooted' in Tolomeo's treatment in *De regimine principum*.¹⁶ Finally, and potentially most significantly, we have seen how Tolomeo shared, at least in embryonic form and in some cases fully, some of the assumptions and orientations of the later civic humanists: the valorization of ancient Roman republicanism and the city-state, the denigration of the Roman Empire and the rejection of its suprahistorical role, the development of historical thinking and especially the use of Roman history for an exemplar of the nature of civic growth and decay, the role of citizenship in the full realization of the individual and the development of virtue and the consequent celebration of the

¹³ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', p. 285 (pdf version, p. 9).

¹⁴ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', pp. 292–93 (pdf version, pp. 13–14).

¹⁵ Wootton, 'True Origins of Republicanism', p. 297 (pdf version, p. 16).

¹⁶ Nirit ben Aryeh Debby, 'Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici in Renaissance Florence, 1400–1406', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55 (2002), 19–48 (pp. 34–35).

active life, and an appreciation of an abundance and variety of goods and the activities of the craftspersons and merchants responsible for a city's prosperity.

Despite these similarities I was not able to make a solid case for Tolomeo's direct influence on any of the well-known late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century civic humanists. Many civic humanist ideas had widespread currency in the milieu of the independent city republics of northern Italy, and even in the despotisms, where they enabled the citizens to glory in their civic heritage and to read meaning into the now-empty forms of their former self-government that they retained. However, it was Tolomeo who was the first to formulate a theoretical defence of the republican cities, and Thomas Aquinas, the purported author of *De regimine principum*, was read widely, so it seems likely to me that a thorough study of Italian political treatises, government proclamations, orations, advice manuals, etc. would turn up much direct influence.

When we come to non-Italian writers we find ourselves in a similar situation. There is one demonstrable instance of Tolomeo's influence and a number of instances that demand further work. Possible influence is not limited to supporters of republicanism; as Cary Nederman writes: 'Surely the most famous and influential account of the ideas of royal lordship and political lordship may be found in Ptolemy of Lucca's *De regimine principum*.'¹⁷ With the widespread distribution of *De regimine principum*, and the fact that readers encountered in the earlier chapters of it the strongly monarchical views of Thomas Aquinas, it is not surprising that some of them would seek to interpret Tolomeo's royal rule in a favourable way, perhaps by arguing for a combination of it with political rule. That Tolomeo sometimes himself praised monarchy and that some of the ancient Greek cities of which he approved had kings only facilitated this process. That was certainly the case with the English theorist and legist John Fortescue (c. 1395–c. 1477). Recently Thomas Osborne has followed up my comments and the earlier ones of Felix Gilbert on Fortescue's dependence on Tolomeo, deepening our understanding of this influence and also showing how Fortescue's views diverged from Tolomeo's because of the particular English political experience.¹⁸

Claude de Seyssel may have made a similar kind of adaptation of Tolomeo, in that he too sought to unite political and regal government. Unlike Fortescue,

¹⁷ Nederman, 'From Moral Virtue', p. 46.

¹⁸ Thomas Osborne, 'Dominium Regalem et Politicum: Sir John Fortescue's Response to the Problem of Tyranny as Presented by Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca', *Medieval Studies*, 62 (2000), 161–88. See also Blythe, *Ideal Government*, pp. 260–65 and Felix Gilbert, 'Sir John Fortescue's *Dominium regale et politicum*', *Mediaevalia et Humanistica*, 2 (1943), 88–97.

however, he was much more interested in the institutional separation of the two, and he especially praised the doge/council structure of Venice. Where he is most like Tolomeo is in his depiction of the harmonious workings of the parts of a state:

Thus the goods and honors, responsibilities, and administration of the common weal being divided and parceled out in this manner among all the estates proportionately, according to their condition and preeminence and the equality of each maintained, there ensues a harmony and consonance which is the cause of the preservation and augmentation of the monarchy.¹⁹

Unlike Tolomeo, however, Seyssel shows no confidence in the ability of the lower classes, and unlike Thomas Aquinas he does not provide even a minimal role for them. Seyssel undoubtedly employed *De regimine principum*, but the parameters of his reliance on Tolomeo are yet to be demonstrated.

Although we tend to be more interested in Tolomeo's republican ideas, his treatment of the relationship between church and empire continued to be of interest throughout the Middle Ages and conciliar period. Jürgen Miethke points to the later influence of *De iurisdictione imperii*. Among others, Alvarus Pelagius, Augustinus of Ancona, and Galvaneus Flamma referred to the treatise, William of Ockham took an opposing position but analysed its arguments extensively without mentioning it by name, and Cardinal Domenico Capranica included it in 1458 in a much-copied compilation of writings on church and state. In 1342, around fifteen years after Tolomeo's death, an anonymous author revised it and added ten chapters in order to adapt it to the struggle of John XXII with Ludwig of Bavaria.²⁰ Doubtless there were many more influenced by this treatise and Tolomeo's minor writings on church and empire who have not yet been identified.

One thing that I have tried to emphasize throughout this book, although this sometimes has gotten lost in the close analysis of particular ideas, is the very many worldviews and implicit assumptions that shaped Tolomeo's mentality (and everyone else's as well). So that no matter how attractive and compatible he found a particular authority he could never understand or use it in an absolutely un-

¹⁹ Claude de Seyssel, 'Proem to Appian', in *The Monarchy of France*, trans. by J. H. Hexter, ed. by Donald R. Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 177. See also, *Monarchy*, I.13, p. 58, and Blythe, *Ideal Government*, pp. 265–69.

²⁰ Jürgen Miethke, *De potestate papae: Die päpstliche Amtskompetenz in Widerstreit der politischen Theorie von Thomas von Aquin bis Wilhelm von Ockham* (Tübingen: Siebeck, 2000), pp. 93–94.

mediated manner, but only as filtered through all the other components of his mentality. The further the authority was from him in time, or culture, or religion, the more conciliation had to take place for him to internalize what he interpreted to be the message of the authority. Of necessity what he internalized could never be identical to the original intent of the source. All this might go without saying, except for the fact that those who write about the history of ideas sometimes either assume an impossible community of thought or assume that the inevitable differences make the assertion of any community idealistic and anachronistic.

While these observations have relevance to almost any area of Tolomeo's thought, the fact that my emphasis has been his political thought, the fact that late medieval scholastic political thought has frequently been tied to an analysis of the influence of Aristotle's *Politics*, and the fact that the extent and nature of this influence has been contentiously debated in recent years means that it is particularly this area that I most need to address. What was once the orthodoxy of the 'Aristotelian Revolution' in political thought is now seldom if ever defended in its original form. Cary Nederman and others have shown convincingly that other sources were central to late medieval political thought and argued credibly that the 'revolution' was more of an evolution from some currents in earlier medieval thought that were not diametrically opposed to the ideas in the *Politics*. Yet many of us continue to argue for a central role of Aristotle's treatise. Nederman himself acknowledges Aristotle's importance:

To delimit Aristotelianism in the manner I have proposed is not, however, to diminish or trivialize its importance in medieval moral and political thought. It is difficult to look anywhere among the texts of the age — before as well as after the translation and circulation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* — and not encounter distinctive Aristotelian features. Many medieval thinkers simply could not have wound up embracing the same positions in the absence of a detectible strain of Aristotelian learning. Indeed, one of Aristotelianism's advantages was that it could coherently support a range of moral and political viewpoints. But Aristotelianism could not be extended and applied infinitely. There is perhaps ultimately more to be learned from mapping the boundaries of medieval Aristotelianism than with establishing its core.²¹

If we all agree that Aristotle was exceptionally influential if not revolutionary, that later medieval political thought would have been quite different without him, that medieval people came to their reading of the *Politics* with many fixed ideas, that they relied on a variety of sources and authorities, and that Aristotle, like all

²¹ Cary Nederman, 'The Meaning of "Aristotelianism" in Medieval Moral and Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57 (1996), 563–85 (p. 585).

authorities had ‘a nose of wax’,²² what are we arguing about? One thing that I think has incensed Nederman is the persistence of claims that various medieval authors were faithfully reproducing Aristotelian ideas when in fact they were moulding them for their own purposes or even getting non-Aristotelian ideas from another source and attributing them to Aristotle. One of several key examples from Nederman’s work is his demonstration that scholars bought Marsilius of Padua’s namedropping of Aristotle and failed to notice that he actually got his very different concept of the origin of society from the unnamed Cicero. Another shortcoming of such scholarship, in his opinion, is that the argument for a continuous evolution of political thought from 1200–1700 (a position most associated with my teacher Brian Tierney and one that Nederman approves of in many ways) threatens to minimize the equally important changes in thought that happened in this period.²³

The question of whether Tolomeo (or anyone else) was an Aristotelian is thus not a simple one, and the way it is often posed is metaphysical, implicitly assuming the existence of an ‘Ideal Aristotelianism’. This does not imply that it is a useless question; again as Nederman writes, ‘Even if it is no longer possible to take the concept of ‘Aristotelianism’ to be self-evident, this does not mean that that we ought to press for the meaninglessness of the appellation “Aristotelian”.’ He suggests that we view Aristotelianism as an approach to how one discusses political and moral questions rather than a set of conclusions.²⁴ This is a sensible approach, and certainly Tolomeo, in *De regimine principum*, if nowhere else, followed an unambiguously Aristotelian approach to his subject by this definition.

But it also makes sense to me to ask the question in a somewhat more concrete way, viz., how Tolomeo adopted, adapted, and modified specific ideas of Aristotle, about government, citizenship, participation, etc. Reading Aristotle in light of his own education, beliefs, and experience he found ideas in Aristotle that attracted him, whether he was interpreting them correctly or not, and he often framed his

²² Alain de Lille (1128–1203). Nederman, in ‘Imperfect Regimes’, p. 526, and in many other places in recent years, has repeated his two central points about non-Aristotelian influences on medieval writers and their remoulding of Aristotelian ideas.

²³ Nederman, ‘From Moral Virtue’, p. 44. Nederman has also attacked the related position of many of the same scholars in arguing for continuity of political thought in the same period, which he calls ‘neo-Figgisite orthodoxy’, that overplayed in his opinion the contributions of ecclesiastical writers, especially conciliarists, to modern constitutionalism; see Nederman, ‘Constitutionalism — Medieval and Modern’, pp. 179–94.

²⁴ Nederman, ‘The Meaning of “Aristotelianism”’, pp. 584, 565.

discussions around them. As happened in other fields, Tolomeo and other scholars found the Aristotelian formulation of political science so rational that it seemed to compel assent, even if it could not always be successfully applied. Given the limited historical perspective of medieval times, it was fairly easy to read contemporary reality into Greek politics, especially for one raised in the republican northern Italian city-states.

Nevertheless, we should not overestimate the part that political thought, and still less Aristotle's *Politics*, played in Tolomeo's working life. His primary interest was not government; he was much more caught up in the life of his order and the church, and was doubtless more interested in protecting the interests of the latter than assuring the best republic, even though he believed that that would contribute to human salvation. If he had an overall plan for the corpus of his writing it was a history of humankind and the church from Adam and Eve to the present, to which *De regimine principum* was peripheral and perhaps never even released to the public.

Further, most of his works do not mention the *Politics* at all, and those that do normally refer only to certain parts of it. The few references to it in *De iurisdictione imperii* and *De operibus sex dierum* are all to Book I. In *De regimine principum* Tolomeo refers only to Books I–III, except for two minor references to Book IV, and one to Book VI.²⁵ He never discusses the connection between education and government, the subject of Book VIII, and he avoids the details of possible governments in Books IV, V, and VI. By skipping these he avoided the issue of revolutions, the subject of Book V, as well as how to preserve regimes, the topic of Book IV. Tolomeo was interested in the general theoretical problems of Books I–III, but he ignores the specific theoretical questions of Books IV–VI: the many subvarieties of types of government and how they work. More puzzling is his neglect of Book VII, which deals with several subjects of interest to him: virtue, necessities of cities, criticism of business, the relationship between climate and government, and the physical environment of the city. While there may be some other explanation, it is possible that Tolomeo did not have some of these books available to him as he wrote.

²⁵ *De operibus sex dierum* at one point (v.9, p. 112) refers to 'Politics II and VII', but although there is a hint of what he cites in Book VII the real citation should be I.3. *De regimine principum* has a reference to Book IV (II.14.1–3), which should be to Book I. In contrast, Aquinas's much shorter part has six references to Books V–VII, none to Book IV, and seven references to Books I–III (none to Book II, which is one of Tolomeo's most frequently cited).

Despite all these reservations, I have argued that the assimilation of the *Politics* was central to Tolomeo's political ideology and that his study of it over time deepened his conception of political science and transformed his understanding of the political community, which became distinctively more Aristotelian, in some reasonable sense of that word. This new perspective enabled him better to analyse the government of republican communes and defend them against the ideologically dominant support of monarchy, even among most Italian writers. It was what he learned from Aristotle that enabled him to be the first medieval European writer to attack monarchy in principle and identify it with despotism, and to justify theoretically the connections between virtue, political government, and the common good. Tolomeo would have thought of himself as an Aristotelian, and he would have seen the *Politics* as giving firm rational grounding to, and therefore justifying, his earlier beliefs. Most of his conclusions did not change, but it was not simply his justification of them that evolved over time, but his underlying political conceptions, which came to rely more and more on his understanding of Aristotle's *Politics*.

Would Aristotle have agreed with Tolomeo on basic questions? Clearly, no, for even aside from Tolomeo's lack of interest in some of Aristotle's important topics, Tolomeo derived all government from God and subordinated all aspects of human society to the ultimate authority of a supramonarchical pope. Obviously, Tolomeo would have understood that in this he departed from Aristotle, but likely saw no insoluble difficulty in separating the spheres, and he attempted to assimilate his hierocratic views with his secular republican ones by including papal power in a Aristotelian classification of modes of rule. The reconciliation of Aristotle and Augustine proved much more intractable, and ultimately impossible for Tolomeo to accomplish. Certainly he understood this as well, but was unable to break definitively with Augustine in order to make his views on government consistent, despite a valiant attempt to turn Augustine's attack on Rome into praise and reposition his inevitable association of government with repression and sin as merely a necessary consequence for peoples lacking the political ability to govern themselves. In the end, on this score at least, Tolomeo ended up much more an Aristotelian than an Augustinian.

However, Tolomeo's treatment of most political topics, even in his most mature writing, differs significantly from Aristotle's in significant ways. Political life is natural, but stems as much from human needs as from an inherently political nature and from the need to develop virtue. One can develop as a whole and virtuous person only in society, but this does not necessarily involve active political participation. The ends of the political community go beyond earthly

happiness and involve virtues at least partially distinct from political ones. There are a variety of different kinds of government, but all can be reduced to political or despotic rule, and only political rule is good. Citizenship involves participation, but this may mean functional contribution to the body politic or the possibility of office for a few, not a direct share in government.

Nevertheless, for his general approach to the analysis of politics (Nederman's criterion), his criteria for judging the worth of government, his conception of the common good and citizenship, and his basic political principles Tolomeo was greatly and increasingly indebted to Aristotle's *Politics*. Above all, he understood Aristotle's emphasis on the city and the type of government suited to it. In these areas Tolomeo usually understood Aristotle correctly, and the 'twisting' of Aristotelian texts that did occur resulted in most cases from flawed understanding, not conscious deception. Moreover, in *De regimine principum* Tolomeo cited Aristotle, not merely to make a point, but for close analysis, constantly using Aristotelian terminology and concepts even when not discussing Aristotle directly. He analysed a wealth of politics, without, like Aristotle, getting bogged down in a welter of details. Instead, he chose a few examples wisely from Aristotle, the Bible, and classical and medieval history and used them precisely to construct a novel political theory that could reasonably be called Aristotelian. Although he was not completely consistent, neither was Aristotle.

Nederman is correct to reject doctrinal consensus among medieval writers who used Aristotle's *Politics*, still less any core Aristotelianism. He is also correct to argue that the *Politics* created a community of scholarly writers sharing an Aristotelian approach to political science. But he is wrong to reject the idea of the pervasive use of the Aristotelian text as giving rise to political ideas expressed in a common language. The limitations of William of Moerbeke's translation do not belie this, although they do limit how 'authentically' Aristotelian the medieval commentators could be. And although Bruni reworked the language in his fifteenth-century translation, this did not much affect medieval readings and left a substantial community of reference. Bruni's *Politics* is not a completely different book from William's, and in any case its readers would understand it through the lens of two centuries of interpretation of the earlier translation, despite their hostility to the 'barbarism' of its form.

Nederman has shown that several key Aristotelian political ideas were discussed as early as the twelfth century. Nonetheless, the reception of Aristotle's *Politics* was crucial. First, the ways later medieval thinkers developed these ideas were conditioned by the particular treatment in the *Politics*. Most Aristotelian political ideas before the 1260s came from compendious treatments of these ideas

in the basically nonpolitical works of Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore, and others, and without Aristotle's analysis the response rarely went beyond statement of principles. Certainly, this eased reception of the *Politics*, but it does not seriously diminish its importance. Nederman's demonstration of Cicero's continuing influence is significant, but it is inconceivable that John of Paris or Marsilius of Padua would have written the books they did without Aristotle's *Politics*. And many, probably most, medieval political theorists, like Tolomeo, derived their theories from Aristotle, even though their versions may not have been what Aristotle intended.

Second, many critical Aristotelian ideas came only from the *Politics* or previously unknown parts of the *Ethics*, such as the taxonomy of forms and modes of rule, the analysis of these, and the evaluation of specific ancient governments. Aristotle raised the question of what form of government was best absolutely, best in practice, best for most people, or best in certain circumstances or for certain types of people. He discussed the simple types of government individually and in their possible mixtures. He investigated the nature of law and questioned whether the best government was that of the best person or the best laws. These ideas did lead to a transformation of political thought. It occurred gradually, as Nederman says, but within about a century various new texts led to a remarkable change in the form and content of political writing.

While John of Salisbury and others wrote on politics and the naturalness of government and stressed the importance of law, no medieval writer before the 1260s wrote a systematic work of political science that analysed a variety of governments; almost all were concerned primarily with expounding the virtues and duties of a good ruler, a continuation of the ancient 'mirror of princes' genre. If we compare political thought in 1100 with that in 1300 we see that its marked change is largely due to engagement with Aristotle's *Politics* and *Ethics*. Nevertheless, we may not be able strictly to call what resulted 'Aristotelian'. Tolomeo used Aristotle's *Politics* more than any other contemporary writer to create an original synthesis of Aristotle, Augustine, the Bible, and papalist thought, and applied it to the political and ecclesiological realities of his day. In so doing he was able to defend both the communal governments and papal primacy that were so dear to him.

The example of Aristotelianism demonstrates quite clearly the pervasive interaction of various ideologies and worldviews undergirding Tolomeo's specific political ideas, even if the exact role of each is not as easily described. Just above I referred to some of these, and others have come up throughout the book: Aristotelianism to be sure, but also Augustinianism, papalism, the city-state ethos,

Guelph politics, traditions of biblical interpretation, the Dominican constitution, the divine plan for history, astrology, and divine punishment of bad rulers. I will have succeeded if this book effectively raises these issues and begins to address how Tolomeo synthesized, successfully in some cases, unsuccessfully in others, his various influences. It is my hope that other scholars will take up the questions and issues that remain in order to present a more complete picture of Tolomeo and his position both as a mirror of his times and an innovative contributor to the history of ideas.

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